



# DEBIT AND CREDIT

BY GUSTAV FREYTAG



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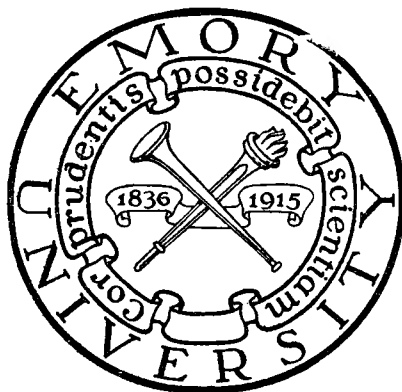
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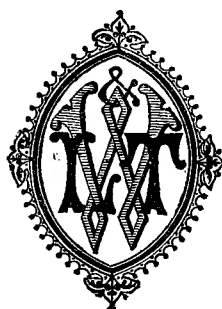
# DEBIT AND CREDIT.

*A Novel.*

By GUSTAV FREYTAG.

*TRANSLATED, WITH THE SANCTION OF THE AUTHOR,*

By MRS. MALCOLM.



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TO HIS SERENE HIGHNESS

ERNEST II.,

DUKE OF SAXE-COBURG-GOTHA.

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It was a smiling May evening on the Kallenburg. Above, round the castle, lay the bloom and fragrance of spring; and the leaves of the red acacia threw their jagged shadows on the dewy turf. Below, in the shade of the valley, the tame roe deer sprang forth from the thicket, and looked wistfully at the bright face of the lady, who distributes the genial blessings of hospitality to all who enter within the precincts of the castle—to men, as well as birds and deer. The repose of evening lay upon hill and valley, and the bright and cheerful landscape was only disturbed by the rolling of thunder in the far distance.

It was on this evening that your Highness, leaning on the old castle-wall, looked anxiously over the fruitful fields into the dim distance. What my noble Prince then said—concerning the troubles of the last year, the despondency and lassitude of the nation, and the duty incumbent on creative writers, who, in such a time as this, should hold before the people a mirror in which they might see their own capabilities, and be thus encouraged and elevated—were golden words, by which a great mind and a warm heart revealed itself, and they long echoed in the heart of the hearer. Since that evening, it has been my wish to adorn with the name of your Highness a book, the plan of which I then conceived.

Almost two years have passed, a fearful war has been kindled, and the German looks on the future of his Fatherland with gloomy anxiety.

In such a time, when the most violent political passions force themselves into the life of every individual, the cheerful calm, which the productive genius requires to develop the pictures of his imagination, disappears from his desk. Ah, it has long been wanting to the German author! The quiet comfort of his own life and the life of others has been only too much wanting; wanting is the security and joyful pride, with which the writers of other countries look upon the past and present of their people: instead of this the German has an abundance of humiliations, unfulfilled wishes, and eager passions. Whoever in such times produces a work of imagination, does not write of love alone, but hatred flows also from his pen. In the place of a poetical idea, a practical tendency manifests itself, and instead of natural humour, the reader will perhaps find an unpleasing mixture of downright matter of fact and artificial feeling.

Amongst such dangers the novelist has the double duty of keeping the outline of his pictures free from distortion, and his own soul free from prejudice. It is not always in one's power to give the highest expression and noblest form to the beautiful, but the writer of works of fiction ought always to be truthful to his art, and to his nation.

To seek this truth, and to represent it when I had found it, I considered the task of my life.

And therefore, I respectfully dedicate this light work to you, my Noble Master. I shall be happy if it gives your Highness the impression of being true to life and art, although nowhere transcribed from the casual occurrences of actual life.

GUSTAV FREYTAG.

*Leipsic.*





# DEBIT AND CREDIT.

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## VOLUME I.

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### CHAPTER I.

OSTRAU is a small country town near the Oder, celebrated even as far as Poland for its college and its gingerbread, which is still made there with unadulterated honey. In this old-fashioned place, there lived, some time ago, the royal auditor Wohlfart; amongst the distinguishing traits of whose character were an enthusiastic admiration for his king, and a hearty love for all his fellow-creatures, with the exception of two Ostrau rogues and an uncouth hosier. He also took a secret pleasure and humble pride in the active performance of his troublesome official duties. He had married late in life, and lived with his wife in a small house, cultivating his little garden with his own hands. But, alas! this happy couple remained for many years childless. At length, however, after having ornamented her white dimity bed-curtains with broad frills and two great tassels, the good woman, just as she had smoothed the last folds, and was thoroughly satisfied that the curtains were of unimpeachable cleanliness, disappeared behind them for some weeks. Behind these white curtains, the hero of our tale was born.

Anthony was a good child, and, in his mother's eyes, was endowed, from the very first day of his life, with the most extraordinary qualities. Not to mention that it was a long time before he could make up his mind to take his food from the hollow of his spoon, but would obstinately maintain the opinion that this office pertained to the **handle**; to say nothing of the unaccountable predilection that he showed for the tassel on his father's black cap, which every day, with the assistance of the nurse, he secretly raised from the paternal head, and replaced it with a laugh; he showed himself on more important occasions, the most peculiar child that ever existed. It was very difficult to persuade him to go to bed at night, and often when the clock sounded, he begged with folded hands for permission to continue running about. He would sit for whole hours together over his picture-book, and converse with the red cock on the last page, assuring it of his love, and entreating it

not to allow itself to be withdrawn from its little family, to be roasted by the kitchenmaid. Sometimes, when in the midst of play with other children, he would run away from the merry circle, and place himself with serious countenance in the corner of the room, in order to meditate. In general, the result of his meditations was, to seek out something which he supposed would give pleasure to his parents or playfellows. But his greatest delight was to sit opposite to his father, crossing his legs like him, and pretending to smoke with a hollow elder branch, as he did with a pipe. Then he made his father relate stories to him, or told him some in return; and this he did, as the female world of Ostrau asserted unanimously, with so much gravity and understanding, that, except for his blue eyes and rosy, childlike face, he looked exactly like a young minister of state. He was so rarely naughty, that many of the ladies of Ostrau who were disposed to take a gloomy view of life long doubted whether such a child could live; but this fear was at last dispelled by Anthony one day giving a sound thrashing to the son of the Landrath, which misdeed removed his prospect of heaven to a convenient distance. In short, he was just as remarkable a boy as the only child of warm-hearted parents is wont to be. At the commercial school, and later at college, Anthony was a pattern for all others, and the pride of his family; and as the drawing-master maintained that he ought to be an artist, and the head master of the third form advised his being destined to classical studies, the boy, with his numerous talents, would have run the usual risk of precocious children, of not applying himself steadily to any one pursuit, if an accidental circumstance had not decided his vocation.

Every Christmas a box was brought by post to the auditor's house, containing a loaf of the finest sugar, and a large packet of coffee. The auditor's wife was in the habit of breaking the ordinary sugar, but the good man would not allow any one but himself to break this, and he did it with the greatest vigour and solemnity, rejoicing in the four-cornered cubes which he so artistically produced. On the other hand, his wife roasted the coffee herself, and it was with an agreeable feeling of self-satisfaction that the worthy man drank the first cup of this coffee. These were hours in which that poetical atmosphere which so often pervades the souls of children seemed to fill the whole house. The father then related to his son the history of this annual gift. Some years before, he had found in a bundle of dusty papers, which had long been forgotten, a document from which it appeared that a great landed proprietor in Posnanian was indebted several thousand thalers to a well-known mercantile house. It was evident that, during a time of war and anarchy, the bond had been placed in the wrong bundle. The auditor gave information of his discovery, and thus enabled the mercantile house to gain a lawsuit against the heirs of the debtor which they had despaired of. After this the young head of the firm did not rest till he discovered the finder of the document, and wrote him a very courteous letter, which the auditor answered after his own fashion, very decidedly declining all thanks for what he considered only fulfilling the duties of his office. From that time the said box made its appearance every Christmas, accompanied by a short cordial letter, which received as regularly by return of post an answer that was a masterpiece of the auditor's

handwriting, in which he perseveringly expressed his surprise at the unexpected gift, and with all his heart wished a happy new year to the firm of F. O. Schroeter. Even to his wife he spoke of the Christmas gift as a mere accident—a trifle—a nothing, which depended on the whim of one of the clerks of the firm, and eagerly protested every year against her reckoning upon the box in her household calculations. Nevertheless, his heart clung to it secretly. It was not the value of the pound of refined Cuba that made him so happy, but the poetry of this mental connection with an entirely different sphere of life. He preserved all the letters from the Firm with as much care as the three love-letters he had received from his wife—indeed he stitched them with black and white sewing silk into a small book, together with the things he most prized; he became a connoisseur in colonial produce, a critic whose taste was highly respected by the tradespeople of Ostrau. He could not help treating with a certain degree of contempt, cheap sugar and Brazil coffee, as inferior products of creation; he began to take an interest in wholesale trade, and studied regularly in the papers the market prices of sugar and coffee, which were placed after the political intelligence, with curious notices, perfectly unintelligible to the uninitiated: he even speculated in his own mind with his friends the great merchants, as if he were their partner, was vexed when coffee was quoted dull, and rejoiced when sugar was brisk.

This tie, which united the household of the auditor with the course of business of the great world, may seem insignificant and slight, but it became a guide to Anthony, and gave the direction to his whole life. For when the old gentleman was sitting in his garden, in the evening, with his velvet cap over his grey hair, and his pipe in his mouth, he took the opportunity of quietly giving expression to his wishes, enlarging upon the advantages of an employment which opened the most splendid prospects, and then inquired jokingly of his son, whether he would like to become a merchant. Visions, bright as the coloured images of the kaleidoscope flitted before the mind of the child. Sugar-loaves, raisins, almonds, and golden oranges, together with the tender smiles of his parents, and the mysterious delight which the arrival of the box had always occasioned, so worked on his imagination, that he exclaimed, "Yes, father, I will!" Let it not be said, that life is poor in poetical aspirations, the enchantress still rules supreme over the actions of men. But let every one take heed what dreams he harbours in the secret corners of his soul, for they may easily attain such strength as to become his masters, and severe masters too.

The family continued to live quietly in this way for many years. Anthony grew up and passed through all the forms of the college till he reached a proud position in the highest; and when his mother begged of her husband to come to a decision on the future course of Anthony's life, he answered with a triumphant smile, "The decision is made, he will be a merchant; he must first finish with college, and then the whole world will be open to him." He seemed by his manner to imply that the certificate of matriculation would be a key to all the honours of the world, yet in his heart he felt some anxiety as to how the family dream was to be realized.

Meanwhile a melancholy day arrived, when the window shutters

remained long closed, the maid-servant ran up and down stairs, her eyes red with weeping, and the physician came and shook his head, and the old gentleman stood by the bedside of his wife, with his velvet cap in his clasped hands, whilst the son knelt sobbing by the bed, with his curly head resting on it, which the dying mother stretched out her hand to stroke. Three days after she was buried. On the evening of the funeral, the auditor and Anthony were sitting together, pale and lonely. Anthony slept out from time to time into the garden, to weep in secret, and the old man rose frequently from his chair, and went into the bedroom where the white curtains with their two tassels hung, and wept also. The boy grieved long, but at length the colour returned to his cheeks, the old man never recovered his strength. He did not complain of anything, smoked his pipe as before, and was still vexed when the market for coffee was flat, but it was not the same smoking, nor the same vexation as formerly. Often did he look thoughtfully and sorrowfully on his son, and the lad could not guess what made his father so anxious. At last, however, one Saturday, when his father had again asked him whether he would be a merchant, and Anthony had for the hundredth time assured him that it was precisely the vocation he wished for, the old gentleman rose resolutely from his chair, called the maid-servant and ordered a conveyance to the capital for the next morning. He did not confess to his son for what reason he took this unprecedented expedition, and, poor man, he had good grounds for his silence! For though he had during twenty years prided himself on his friendship with the great merchant, yet his heart failed him, when it became a question of presenting himself before him, and asking a place in his office for his son; his wish appeared to him too bold, and his claims too small. Often had he resolved upon it, and as often deferred it, till at last his anxiety about his son became greater than his fears.

When he returned at a late hour on the following day, he was in quite another frame of mind, happier than he had been since the death of his wife. He cheered his son, who awaited his return in a state of anxious suspense, by his report of the incredible pleasantness of the great business, and the kindness of the great merchant. He had been invited by him to dinner, had eaten plovers' eggs, and had drunk the Greek wine out of his friend's cellar—a wine in comparison of which the best wine at the hotel in Ostrau was nothing better than vinegar; he had obtained from him a promise that his son should enter the office at the end of a year, and received some hints concerning the preparation that would be desirable. The very next day Anthony was sitting with a large account book before him, disposing with unlimited power of thousands of pounds sterling, which he changed into Rhenish florins, or Hamburgh marks, or sent about the world as Brazilian milreis, and at last placed them quietly in Mexican bonds, which gave him, with the greatest certainty, interest at the rate of ten per cent. Having thus accumulated a colossal fortune, he went into the garden with a small book in his hand, the title of which promised to make him within a month a finished English scholar. There, to the horror of all the German sparrows and finches, he endeavoured to pronounce the *a*, and other respectable letters, in every way that is possible, when a person pronounces them otherwise than is compatible with their nature and character.

In this way another year passed; Anthony was eighteen, and had gone through his examination for the university, when again one morning the window shutters of the auditor's house were not opened at the usual hour, again the maid-servant rushed about the house with weeping eyes, and again the night-lamp flickered with a tremulous and ominous light. This time the old gentleman himself was laid up, and Anthony sat by the bedside holding both his father's hands. But in vain he tried to keep him, the old gentleman would not be kept: after having repeatedly blessed his son, death hurried him away. Some days of intense grief followed, and Anthony remained alone in the silent house, an orphan, on the threshold of a new life.

The old man had not been an auditor in vain, his housekeeping was a model of arrangement. The small portion of property he left, was carefully written down to the last penny, and the memorandum placed in the secret drawer of his writing-table. All that the maid had broken and spoilt during the last twelvemonth was marked down in its fitting place and reckoned up. Suitable dispositions were made of everything; a letter directed to the merchant was also found, which the deceased had written with trembling hand a few days before his death; a faithful friend of the family was appointed guardian to Anthony, who was charged with the sale of the house and garden, and all they contained; and early one summer morning, a month after the death of his father, Anthony passed the threshold of the paternal house, placed the keys in the hands of his guardian, committed his luggage to the care of a carrier, and started through the gate of the little town towards the capital, with his father's letter to the merchant in his pocket.

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## CHAPTER II.

It was already noon, when Anthony shook hands with his Ostrau neighbour who had conveyed him as far as the last stage before the capital, and proceeded at a brisk pace along the high road. It was a bright summer's day; the newly-mown grass was drying in the sun, the sharpening of the scythe was heard from the meadows, and the indefatigable larks sang high in the air. The landscape that lay stretched out before the traveller was a level plain; behind him in the distance rose a chain of blue mountains. Small brooks, bordered by alder trees and willows, ran merrily through the country, fertilizing the meadows, which were surrounded by rich corn-fields. On all sides rose the glittering steeples of the churches, each the centre of a group of red and brown roofs, encircled by trees. Near many of these villages, a splendid avenue, or the roof of a large building, announced the seat of a nobleman, which seemed to lie near the peasants' cottages like the sheep-dog by the flock.

Anthony hastened forward with a light step. Before him, like that sunny plain, lay the future, full of glittering dreams and fresh hopes. After long hours of mourning, pent up in a narrow chamber, his heart now for the first time began to beat again. His eye was



bright, and his lips smiled with the vigour of youth; all around him was brilliant, fragrant, and quivering with electric fire. He drank in long draughts of the intoxicating fragrance that arose from the blooming earth. When he passed a mower in the field, he called out to him "Good day," and the "good day" was returned to the well-dressed youth from every mouth. The ears of corn in the fields inclined their heads on their slender stalks and nodded their greetings to him, and in their shadow, thousands of grasshoppers were chirping merrily, merrily in the sunshine! On the willows a bevy of sparrows were sitting. The little lords of the field stirred not when he stopped at the foot of the tree; no, they bent their heads down, and cried, "Good day, traveller; whither goest thou?" And Anthony answered softly, "To the great city, to enter into life." "Good luck to you!" cried the sparrows; "have courage, and go forward."

Anthony took a footpath across a meadow, and passing over a bridge found himself in a small wood, amidst well-kept gravel walks. As he proceeded, the grove took more and more the character of a regular shrubbery, and on passing round a group of large trees, he stopped in front of a lawn. Beyond it stood a manor-house, with a turret at each end and a balcony. From the balcony a view was opened through the groups of trees, to the beautiful outline of the mountains. Climbing roses and wild vines wound round the turrets, and under the balcony was an opening into a hospitable hall, adorned with flowering shrubs. It was not what would be called a grand place, there were many larger and finer in the neighbourhood; but still it had a noble appearance, very imposing to Anthony, who had grown up in a small town and knew little of the comforts and *agremens* of a country gentlemen's residence. Everything appeared to him splendid and magnificent. The gracefully-shaped flower-beds in the midst of the velvet turf, the variegated groups of hothouse plants, the gay attire with which the gardener had ornamented the house, all appeared to him, in the pure light and tranquillity of the summer's day, like a scene in a foreign land. The happy youth, falling into a state of dreamy ecstasy, seated himself beneath the shade of a large elder tree, and, concealed by it, gazed for a long time on the agreeable prospect. "How happy," thought he, "must those be who dwell here! how noble and distinguished both by birth and mind! On this side are beautiful flowers and large trees, on the other doubtless a spacious court-yard with barns and stables, filled with horses, large oxen, and innumerable sheep." A respect for all who were high in position and of noble family was innate in the son of the poor auditor; and now, when, in the midst of all his delight at the grandeur that surrounded him, his thoughts turned to himself, he felt so entirely insignificant as not to be worth speaking of—a kind of social Tom Thumb, scarcely visible on the grass. Involuntarily he put his hand into his pocket to get his gloves; they were of yellow thread, and his good mother had said that they looked like silk, and silk gloves were considered in Ostrau the greatest of luxuries; so the poor youth put them on with a firm conviction, that through them he became in some measure more worthy of the scene around him.

For a long time he sat in perfect solitude, but, at last, life was infused into the picture; a graceful female figure, stepped from the open door on to the balcony, she had on a light summer dress, with ample

lace sleeves, and her hair was beautifully dressed, like what Anthony remembered to have seen in old rococo pictures; he could distinctly discern her delicate features, and the clear look of her eyes, as she fixed them on the lawn below. The lady was leaning against the balustrade motionless as a statue, and Anthony looked up at her with reverence. At last a bright-coloured parrot flew through the open door, behind the lady, and placed itself on her hand to be caressed by her. This splendid creature increased Anthony's admiration; and when the parrot was followed by a young girl almost grown up, who, smiling, threw her arms round the neck of the beautiful lady, and was tenderly kissed on the cheek by her, and when the parrot flew round the heads of both, and hopped screaming from one shoulder to the other, then his feeling of reverence was raised to such a pitch that he blushed with emotion, and withdrew himself deeper within the shadow of the shrubs.

His thoughts were of the two beautiful ladies on the balcony, when he returned along the broad path in order to find an exit from the garden, and his step was elastic like that of one to whom something pleasant has happened. Suddenly he heard behind his back the snorting of a horse; he turned round and saw the younger of the two ladies riding a black pony along the same path he was going. The slender girl sat confidently on the horse, and she used her parasol as a riding whip. The Ostrau ladies were not in the habit of riding ponies, so that Anthony had only once seen an accomplished female rider, one who with a very red face, and a long red dress, rode through the streets, accompanied by a tall gentleman with a black beard, and preceded by a merry clown; she stopped at every corner, where her horse always pranced and jumped about, and the clown made absurd and amusing speeches to the assembled children. Even then he had gazed on the beautiful rider with unspeakable admiration, and now he had the same feeling, if possible in a still greater degree. He stood and bowed respectfully to the fair girl, she acknowledged the homage with a gracious nod of her head, then suddenly stopping her horse, asked kindly, "Are you seeking anyone? perhaps you wish to speak to my father."

"Pardon me," said Anthony, with the greatest respect. "probably I am on a road which is not permitted to strangers. I came by the footpath across the meadows, and found neither gate nor enclosure."

"The gate is on the bridge, and is open during the day," said the young lady, looking graciously at Anthony; for as respect is not exactly the feeling usually inspired by girls of fourteen, the superabundant amount of it in Anthony was uncommonly agreeable to her.

"As you are in the garden, will you not take a look at it? We shall be glad if it pleases you," she added, with dignity.

"I have taken that liberty," Anthony replied with another bow. "I have been as far as the lawn in front of the castle. "It is splendid," exclaimed the ingenuous boy with enthusiasm.

"Yes," answered the young lady, still keeping in her pony, "mamma gave all the directions to the gardener herself."

"Then the lady who was standing on the balcony was your mother?" inquired Anthony, timidly.

"Ah, you have been listening," cried out the child, assuming an air of importance; "do you know that was not fair?"

"Do not be angry with me for that," entreated Anthony, humbly, "I retired immediately; but it was a glorious sight, two such ladies together, the clusters of roses, and the delicate tracery of the vine leaves, around you. I shall never forget it," he added seriously.

"He is charming," thought the girl. "As you have seen so much of our garden," she said, affably, "you ought also to go to the points of view. I am going to them, if you like to accompany me."

Anthony followed her in the happiest frame of mind. The young lady exhorted her pony to go quietly, and acted as cicerone. She showed him fine groups of trees, and lovely views of the distant landscape, laid aside some of her dignity and became talkative, soon they chatted together without constraint like old acquaintances, at last when some steps in the path gave her a decent pretext she dismounted and led the pony by the bridle; then Anthony ventured to stroke the little animal's neck, which on its side seemed well pleased and sniffed at Anthony's pockets.

"He has confidence in you," said the girl; "he is an intelligent animal. She threw his bridle over his head and gave him a blow, on which the pony galloped away, "We are coming to the flower-garden, which he is not allowed to enter, so he goes to his stable as he is accustomed to do."

"Your pony is a wonderful animal," exclaimed Anthony.

"He loves me," she said; "he follows me at a word."

Anthony thought this very natural, ascribed the same feeling to the parrot, and was inclined to maintain that every other living creature must have a similar sentiment towards his guide.

"I should think you were of good family," she said suddenly, placing her parasol against a tree and looking archly at Anthony.

"No," said the auditor's son sorrowfully, "my father died a month ago, and it is a year since my good mother's death; I am alone, and go to the capital;" his lips quivered at the recollection of his late loss.

Frightened at the pain she had caused, she said, with emotion and embarrassment, "Poor, poor young man! come quick, I will show you something more, here are the hot-beds and the beds of strawberries, there are still some remaining."

"Frantz, bring a plate with strawberries," she called to the gardener. Frantz hastened to bring it. The young lady eagerly seized the plate and offered the strawberries to our hero with a kind smile: "Pray, sir, have the kindness to accept them from me—no guest is allowed to leave my father's house without having tasted the best that the season affords; please take some."

Anthony held the plate in his hand, and looked with tears in his eyes at the young lady.

"I will eat with you," she said, and took two of the strawberries, after which Anthony emptied the plate.

"Now I will take you out of the garden," said the young lady. The gardener opened respectfully a little side door, and she led the traveller to a lake, on which a number of swans were floating.

"They are coming towards us," exclaimed Anthony, joyfully.

"They know that I have something for them in my pocket," said his companion, at the same time loosening the chain of a boat. "Enter, sir, I will take you over; your road is on the other side."

"I dare not trouble you so far," said Anthony, and hesitated to enter.

"I will have no opposition," replied the girl in a tone of command; "it is a pleasure to me." She sat in the stern and skilfully propelled the boat with a light oar. Thus they crossed the lake slowly, the swans following, and she stopping from time to time to feed them with bits of bread.

Anthony sat opposite to her quite happy; he was as if under the influence of enchantment. In the background the dark foliage of the trees, around him the clear water splashing softly against the prow of the boat, in front of him the slender figure of the fair rower, with her bright blue eyes, her noble countenance lighted up with a lovely smile, and behind her the flock of swans, the white attendants of the lady of the lake. It was a charming dream, such as is only dreamed in youth.

The boat touched the shore, Anthony landed from it, and saying farewell, involuntarily stretched out his hand towards her. "Fare you well," said the child, touching his hand with the tips of her fingers; she then turned the boat and rowed slowly back. Anthony sprang across the turf to the raised pathway, and looked from thence back upon the lake. The young girl, having landed near a group of trees, turned round once more to look at him, before she disappeared behind them. Through an opening Anthony saw the castle lying before him; lofty and stately it commanded the plain. The banners fluttered gaily from the turrets, and the foliage of the creepers which covered the brown stones of the wall glittered in the sunshine.

"So dignified, so noble!" said Anthony to himself.

"If thou shouldst pay down to this baron a hundred thousand thalers he would not give thee his estate, which he has inherited from his father," said a sharp voice behind Anthony's back. He turned angrily round, the charm had vanished and he stood in the dust of the high road. Near him a youth meanly clad was leaning against the trunk of a willow, holding a small bundle under his arm, and staring at our hero with calm impertinence.

"Is it thee, Veitel Itzig?" exclaimed Anthony, without manifesting any great pleasure at the meeting. Master Itzig was not a strikingly beautiful apparition; haggard and pale, with red curly hair, in an old jacket and ragged trousers, he looked like one in whom policemen would take a greater interest than in other travellers. He was from Ostrau, a schoolfellow of Anthony's. Anthony had in former days, by the valiant use both of his tongue and fists, protected the Jew boy from the ill-treatment of other wanton schoolfellows, and had thereby acquired the proud self-consciousness of being the defender of oppressed innocence. For instance, once in a dark scene of school life, when a sausage was made use of to produce a desperate struggle in Itzig's feelings, Anthony had pleaded so boldly for him, that he himself came off with a hole in his head, while his antagonists ran crying and bleeding to hide themselves behind the church and eat the sausage themselves. Since that day Itzig had sworn a kind of attachment to Anthony, which he testified by allowing his protector to help him in difficult tasks, and by obtaining occasionally a piece of Anthony's bread and butter, who had willingly tolerated the unamiable lad, as he was pleased to have a *protégé*, although one

who was suspected of stealing quills, and selling them again to the richer boys. Latterly the young people had seen very little of each other, just enough for Itzig to find an opportunity now and then to renew the familiar style of school intercourse, by occasionally accosting him in a mocking way.

"People say that thou art going to the great town to learn business," continued Veitel. "Thou wilt learn to make up cornets, and to sell syrup to old women. I too am going to the great town to make my fortune."

Anthony was displeased with the insolent speech, and familiar thou with which his former schoolfellow still continued to address him, and answered shortly, "Then go after thy fortune and do not lose thy time with me."

"There is no hurry," Veitel replied, coolly. "I shall wait till thou goest too, unless my clothes are too bad for thee." This appeal to Anthony's feelings had the effect of making him tolerate in silence his unwelcome companion. He cast one more look upon the castle, and then strode on silently along the high road, Itzig always half a pace behind him. At last Anthony turned round and inquired about the proprietor of the castle.

If Veitel Itzig was not a friend of the family, he was at least an intimate friend of the stable boy, for he knew a great deal concerning the circumstances of the baron who lived there. He stated that the baron had only two children, that he had a splendid flock of sheep on a large estate entirely free from debt, and that his son was absent at school. As Anthony listened with great interest, which he betrayed by his questions, Itzig said at last: "If thou wishest to have the baron's estate, I will buy it for thee."

"Thanks," answered Anthony, coldly, "thou hast only just told me that he would not sell."

"When a person will not sell, he must be compelled to do so," exclaimed Itzig.

"And art thou the man to compel him?" said Anthony.

"Whether I am the man or not, it is equally possible to make my man sell whatever he has; there is a receipt by which every one from whom one wants anything may be compelled to give it up whether he will or no."

"Must one give him a draught, or a philter?" asked Anthony, contemptuously.

"Money is a herb with which one can do much in this world," answered Veitel; "but how a small man can manage to get such an estate as the baron's, is a secret known only to a few. He who has that secret will become a great man like Rothschild, if he live long enough."

"And provided he is not first sent to gaol," objected Anthony.

"No fear of gaol," answered Veitel; "it is to learn this secret that I go to the town. It is written upon paper, and whoever can find the papers will become a mighty man, I will search for them till I find them."

Anthony looked at his companion, as one would look upon a man whose mind is wandering, and at last said, compassionately, "Thou wilt never find them anywhere, poor Veitel."

But Itzig drawing close to Anthony in a confidential manner, con-



tinued: "What I tell thee, do not relate to any one again. Those papers have been in our town, some one got them from an old dying beggar and became a powerful man, the old beggar gave them to him one night when he was praying by his bedside that the angel of death might depart from him."

"And dost thou know the man who has the papers?" asked Anthony inquisitively.

"If I know him I shall not tell," answered Veitel, slyly, "but I will find the receipt. And if thou wishest to have the baron's estate and his horses and cows, and his fine birds, and that dainty girl his daughter, I will get them for thee for old friendship's sake, and because thou hast given a licking to the schoolboys for me."

Anthony was indignant at the impudence of his companion. "Take care that thou dost not become a rascal; thou appearest to me to be on the way to it," he said angrily, and walked on the other side of the road.

Itzig was not the least disturbed by this good advice, but went on quietly whistling. Thus the two travellers continued walking for a long time in silence, which was broken in the most unconcerned way by Itzig, when they reached the next village, who informed his companion of the name of the adjoining gentleman's place and of the financial position of the owner. The same information was repeated at every village, so that Anthony was quite surprised at the extent of his companion's statistical knowledge. Finally both became silent, and went the last three or four miles side by side without speaking a word.

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### CHAPTER III.

BARON ROTHSATTEL belonged to the small number of those who are not only called happy by the whole world, but believe themselves to be so. He was descended from a very old family. A Rothsattel had gone to the East at the time of the Crusades, and a rococo flacon of coloured glass was preserved in the family under the name of an oriental flask, as a proof of the existence of the ancestor, and as a remembrance of those grand times. Another Rothsattel had led a band of miners against the Hussites, and was slain, together with the whole mass of them, for his own honour and that of God. A third was ensign in the army of Maurice of Saxony; he was considered to be the founder of the line of Rothsattel-Steigebugul, and his portrait in the dress of a warrior was still hanging in one of the turret rooms of the castle. Another had taken an active part in the Thirty Years' War in different armies, and also on his own account: according to the family tradition, he was very fat and a great drinker, used strong language, and was rather free in his manners. He was the first of the family that had come into the country in which the scene of our story is placed, and had in some way or other obtained possession of several estates. Amongst the nurses of the family, there had existed from a remote period, a vague belief that this fat gentleman was to be seen from time to time in the cellar sitting on a barrel of kROUT. There the restless spirit sat groaning as a punishment for

the shocking offences he had perpetrated against the virtue of his female acquaintance. Another ancestor had been imperial counsellor at Vienna: the great-grandfather of the present proprietor, had attracted the notice of the great king of Prussia and been kindly accosted by him. The grandfather had also been in his time an enterprising and distinguished cavalier, though he had gained no laurels in the field, having contented himself with finding them in the boudoirs of gay ladies, and at the card table. Unfortunately his estates had in consequence become involved, and had slipped through his hands. Finally, his son, the father of the present proprietor, was a plain country gentleman, of moderate understanding, who, after long lawsuits, succeeded in saving one good estate out of the ruins of the family fortune, and passed his life in endeavouring to free it from debt for his descendants. The Rothsattels had always been famous for having a numerous offspring, and all the elderly ladies of the family, declared that this propensity, honourable as it might be in other respects, had alone prevented this noble family from having the nine balls of a count's coronet, or indeed the closed crown of a titular prince, placed over the crest of their progenitors. Contrary to the old custom of the family, the father showed the moderation of his mind by leaving only one son.

The present possessor of the estate had served in a regiment of the guards, as became the son of so warlike a house. He had acquired there the reputation of an accomplished nobleman, proved himself fit for military service, was an excellent comrade, was skilled in all knightly exercises, and was to be relied upon in affairs of honour; his good manners gave him great success at the court balls, and whenever he was commanded to dance by one of the princesses, did so with the most perfect grace. He had also shown himself a man of character, by marrying for love a poor maid of honour, an amiable young lady, whose departure from the court balls occasioned great sorrow to the hearts of all the gentlemen. The baron, like a rational man, had retired with his wife to his country place, lived for many years exclusively for his family, and thus succeeded in paying off the debts he had incurred with his regiment, and in keeping his expenditure within his income. All the arrangements of his house were perfect, and his wife's small dowry was employed in laying out the park for her pleasure. The baron had a cellar stocked with good wines, two splendid carriage-horses, and two fine riding-horses; he visited the farm-yard every morning, and took a ride through the fields every afternoon; he valued his sheep highly, and prided himself upon having their fine wool well washed. He was a thoroughly honest man, his figure was still handsome and dignified, he did the honours of his house perfectly, and was a liberal host. He loved his wife if possible even more than in the first months of their marriage. In short he was a perfect model of a nobleman and country gentleman. He was not overpoweringly rich, being, what is called, a five thousand thaler a-year man, and, in favourable times, his ~~fine~~ property might have sold for a good deal more than the sharp-witted Itzig supposed. But he would rightly have considered it a great folly to do so. Two healthy and clever children completed the happiness of his domestic life, the son was on the point of commencing the family career as a soldier, the daughter was to remain still

some years under her mother's wing, before she came out in the great world.

Like all men whose lot it is to have family traditions attached to their cradles and painted on their escutcheons, our baron was inclined to think much both of the past and future of his family. His grandfather had furnished the sad experience, that one ill-regulated mind may succeed in dissipating all that has been acquired, both of wealth and honour, by industrious ancestors; he would therefore have liked to secure his house from such ruin in the future, by entailing his fine estate, and so rendering it more difficult for his heirs, not to make debts, but to pay them. But consideration for his daughter restrained him from taking this step, his better feelings rejected as unjust the idea of disinheriting his beloved child for the sake of some future uncertain Rothsattel. It pained him to feel, that the next generation of his ancient family would be placed on the same footing as the children of officials or tradespeople, and be obliged to earn, by their own exertions, a mere competency. He had often tried to save out of his income, but the times were not favourable for it. Everywhere people began to live in a certain style, and to set more value upon the elegant arrangement of their houses and all the little refinements of life. What he had saved in favourable years, was all spent again in journeys to the baths, which the physicians maintained were made necessary by the delicate state of his wife's health. These thoughts concerning the future condition of his family occupied the mind of the baron, as he galloped on his half thoroughbred horse through the long avenue of chesnuts which led to the castle. It was only a small cloud that passed over the sunshine of his mind, and it vanished in a moment, when the fluttering of female dresses caught his eye, and he recognized his wife, who, with his daughter, was hastening to meet him. He sprang from his horse, kissed the brow of his darling child, and said cheerfully to his wife: "The weather is excellent for hay-making, they are carrying it as fast as possible, and the bailiff asserts, that we have never had such a crop."

"You are fortunate, Oscar," said the baroness, looking at him tenderly.

"As I have been for seventeen years, ever since you became my wife," answered the husband, with a courtesy that came from the heart.

"Is it indeed seventeen years?" exclaimed the baroness, "they have passed like a summer's day. We have been very happy, Oscar." She leaned upon his arm, and looked at him with an expression of gratitude.

"Have been?" said the baron, "I think we are happy still, and I do not see why we should not continue to be so."

"Do not say that, I entreat you," answered the baroness. "I fancy sometimes that so much happiness cannot last, and that I ought to conciliate fate by humility and self-denial."

"Why," said the baron, good humouredly, "fate does not exempt us entirely from troubles. Our atmosphere is not without storms, but this little hand is raised to dispel them, and they pass off. Have you not vexations enough, with the household, the follies of the children and sometimes with your tyrant, that you desire more?"

"You, dear tyrant!" exclaimed the baroness; "it is you I have

to thank for this happiness, and how deeply I feel it! After seventeen years I am still proud of having so noble a lord and master, so fine a castle and farm, where every foot of ground too belongs to me. When you took me to your house, a poor girl, with but my dresses and jewel-box, and even for these I was indebted to the favour of my royal mistress, I knew, for the first time, the happiness of having a home of my own, and no will to obey but that of a beloved husband."

"Yet you have given up much for my sake," said the baron. "I have often feared that our country life would appear too dull and confined for the favourite of the deceased princess."

"There I was a servant, here I am mistress," the baroness said, with a smile; "except my toilet, I had nothing that I could call my own. All day tediously loitering about the rooms of the maids of honour, engaged every evening in the performance of the most insignificant duties, and living in the fear of growing old in a perpetual round of amusements without any real life of one's own! You know that used often to make me sad. Here our furniture is not of rich silk, and there are no malachite tables in our drawing-room, but what the house does contain is mine;" she put her arms round the baron's neck; "you are mine, the children, the castle, and the silver candlesticks, all are mine."

"The new ones are only plated," interposed the baron.

"No one sees that," replied his wife, laughing; "and when I look at our china and see your arms and mine on the border, I like our two dishes ten times better than the quantity that came from the court kitchen. And then those tiresome great court days, and the marshal's table, where you were obliged to know every one, though you cared for no one."

"You are a bright example of contentment," said the baron. "For the sake of yourself and the children, I wish that this estate were ten times as large, and our income such as to enable me to keep a page for you, my lady, and two maids of honour, besides the house-keeper."

"No maids of honour for me," said the baroness, imploringly, "and as for the page, there is no need of one, whilst I have a cavalier so attentive as you."

Thus, in pleasant converse, the baron walked with the two ladies to the castle. Leonora had in the meanwhile seized the bridle of the horse, and exhorted him to make as little dust as possible.

"There is a strange carriage, are any visitors come?" inquired the baron, as they approached the court.

"It is only Ehrenthal," answered the baroness; "he is waiting for you, and has already spent his whole stock of fine speeches upon us. Leonora gave the reins to her tongue, and it was high time to get her away; the absurd man was quite uneasy at the coquetry of the ill-behaved child."

The baron laughed. "I like him the best of this class of men of business," he said; "his manners are not repulsive at least, and in our long intercourse I have always found him trustworthy. Good-day, Herr Ehrenthal, what brings you here?"

Herr Ehrenthal was a well-fed gentleman in the prime of life, his face was too round, too yellow, and too cunning to be handsome: he wore gaiters, had a diamond pin in his shirt, he walked along the

avenue to meet the baron, bowing, and making deep obeisances with his hat.

"Your servant, my good lord," he answered, with a respectful smile; "when I have no business, to bring me here, will your lordship kindly allow me sometimes to enjoy myself in walking over your farm. It is to me a recreation after my labours to come to your courtyard, all the animals so sleek and well fed, the stables and barns so well arranged and abundantly filled. Even the sparrows on the roofs look happier here than the sparrows of other people. As a man of business one sees so much that distresses one, when people fall by their own fault into trouble and ruin, that it does one good to see a life like yours; no anxieties, no great ones at least, and so much heartfelt enjoyment."

"You are so very polite, Herr Ehrenthal, that I cannot but think something of importance brings you here. Is it your wish to have some transactions with me?" inquired the baron, good humouredly.

Shaking his head, as becomes an honest man, when he repels an unjust suspicion, Herr Ehrenthal answered, "Do not speak of business, my lord! When I transact business with you it is no time for civilities. Good wares, good money, that has always been our rule, and by God's help shall always remain so. I only looked in as I was driving by. As he said this he made a slight gesture with his hand, to convey the idea that he was only passing. "I wish to make inquiries about the horse that your lordship wishes to sell. There is a person in the next village to whom I have promised that I would ask about the price. I can do it as well with the steward, if the baron has no time for me."

"Come along, Ehrenthal," said the baron, "I am going to take my horse to the stable myself."

Ehrenthal having made a great many bows to the ladies, which Leonora returned by as many mocking curtsies, followed the baron to the stable door. There he remained standing respectfully, insisting that the horse as well as the baron should enter before him. After a short inspection and the usual speeches and answers, the baron led Ehrenthal also to the cow-house, who then expressed a vehement wish to see the calves too, and finally added a request to be admitted to a sight of the breeding rams. He was an experienced man of business, and if the delight he expressed was somewhat homely and exaggerated, yet what he praised was really praiseworthy, and the baron listened with pleasure.

After inspecting the sheep, Ehrenthal could not tear himself away from them, he was so struck by the fineness and superior quality of the wool. "What a staple!" he sighed out, as if in a state of dreamy ecstasy; "one can already see what it will be next spring." He balanced his head to and fro, and his small eyes twinkled in the sunshine.

"I tell you, my lord baron, that you are a happy man. Have you good news from your son?"

"Thank you, dear Ehrenthal, he wrote to me yesterday, and sent me his certificates," answered the baron.

"He will be like his father," exclaimed Herr Ehrenthal, "a cavalier of the first quality, and a rich man, for the baron knows how to provide for his children."



"I do not save anything, dear Ehrenthal," answered the baron, with an air of indifference.

"Save," exclaimed the dealer, in a tone of contempt for so plebeian an occupation; "why should you save? if I may venture to make this remark as a man of business, who has for a long time had the honour of knowing you. What need is there for you to save?" You will one of these days, when old Ehrenthal is gone, without any saving, leave the young gentleman the estate, which at the lowest estimate is worth a hundred and fifty thousand, and, besides that, to the young lady, your daughter, a dowry of—what shall I say—of fifty thousand thalers ready money."

"You are mistaken," said the baron, seriously, "I am not so rich."

"Not so rich," exclaimed Ehrenthal, with fitting indignation against every one (except the baron) who should dare to maintain any such thing. "It depends only on yourself to be as rich at any moment. He who has a fortune like yours, my lord baron, may double his capital within ten years without any risk. Why should you not borrow money of the landschaft on your estate?"

The provincial landschaft was in those days a great banking establishment, founded by the landed proprietors, which lent money as a first mortgage on feudal estates. The payment was made in bonds, given on behalf of the holder, which were considered universally as the best paper currency. The bank paid the interest to the holder of the bonds, and received it from the debtor, besides a small additional payment for the expenses of administration, and for the gradual liquidation of the debt.

"I enter into no money transactions of this kind," answered the baron, proudly, but the chord which had been touched by the broker vibrated in his heart.

"The transactions I speak of, every prince enters into now-a-days," continued Ehrenthal, eagerly. "If, my lord, you will take the bonds of the landschaft on your estate, you may get any day fifty thousand thalers on good parchment, you pay the landschaft four per cent., and leaving the bonds quietly in your drawer you receive three and a half, then you pay down a half per cent. to the landschaft, and by this half per cent. the debt will be liquidated into the bargain."

"That may be called making debts in order to become rich," objected the baron, shrugging his shoulders.

"I beg your pardon, baron; if a gentleman like you has fifty thousand thalers lying at his disposal, which only cost him half per cent. yearly, he may buy half the world with them. There are always opportunities of buying estates for a mere trifle, when there is ready money or bonds forthcoming at the right time. There are estates to be had, woods to be sold, or shares in mines, or in the stocks of some substantial company. Or the baron may himself establish a manufacture on his estate; you may, if you like, make sugar from beetroot, like Herr von Bergen, near the mountains; or American flowers, like the Duke of Lobau; or Bavarian beer, like your neighbour, Count Horn. Where is the risk? You will get ten, twenty, even fifty per cent. on the capital that you borrowed at four from the landschaft."

The baron looked thoughtfully before him. The broker had told him nothing that was new, or that he had not heard before—indeed,

similar thoughts had often occurred to him. It was just at the time when numerous industrial undertakings had been started in the agricultural districts, from which large sums had been gained, and still greater riches hoped for, by means of steam-engines with their high chimneys, discoveries of mines of coal and ore, and new methods of cultivating the land. The principal land proprietors of the province were at the head of extensive enterprises, founded on a combination of modern science with ancient agriculture. But though there was nothing new or striking in the words of the broker, yet they shot like lightning into the heart of the baron—they came at the right moment. Herr Ehrenthal perceived the effect he had produced, and continued with that bland humour which was his favourite mood: "But what right have I to give advice to a gentleman like you? Every proprietor would tell you that such a transaction in bonds is in these days the most secure way in which a person of your high position can provide for his children. When the grass will have grown on old Ehrenthal's grave, you will think of him and say, 'Ehrenthal was only a simple fellow, but he gave me advice that was good, and has proved a blessing to my family.'"

The baron still looked before him: what had long been working in his heart as a wish had now become a firm resolve. To the broker, however, he said, with feigned indifference, "I will take it into consideration." Ehrenthal was content with the result, and begged permission to take leave of the ladies, a civility which, as a man of the world, he rarely neglected.

It was a pity that the baron did not see the broker's face, as he got into his carriage, and put mechanically into his button-hole the rose which Leonora, with roguish civility, had presented him at parting. There was, indeed, a complacent smile on Herr Ehrenthal's countenance, but it was not from his delight in the beautiful rose. He told the coachman to drive slowly through the baron's property, and looked with great satisfaction on the fields covered with ripening crops on both sides of the way. He met a long train of gigantic waggons loaded with hay from the estate; and as often as his carriage stopped to let one of them pass, his horses plucked the hay, and his coachman turning round cracked the whip and called out, "What fine fodder!"

"A fine estate!" said Herr Ehrenthal, absorbed in thought.

Meanwhile the baroness was sitting in a bower in the garden, turning over the leaves of the last magazine, which the bookseller of the nearest country-town had sent her: she examined with curiosity the prints of the fashions, and amused herself with the trifles of the daily literature; tales of people who had become rich in some extraordinary manner, and of others who had been murdered in a shocking way; of tiger-hunts in the East Indies, excavated mosaic floors, touching descriptions of the attachment of dogs, contemplations on the bright hopes of the immortality of the soul, and whatever else is likely to attract the passing glance of fashionable ladies. Whilst engaged in reading, the baron's handsome wife was playing with the embroidered footstool, her mind was only half occupied with the magazine, she was constantly raising her eyes from it to look at her daughter upon the lawn, who was again occupied with her pony, fit-

ting on him grotesque ruffs of flowers and shreds of newspapers, and a horned cap—a work which the pony endeavoured in vain to frustrate by eating as many flowers, and tearing away as much paper as he could reach with his mouth. When the young lady, proud of her work, turned her head towards the bower, and saw her mother's eyes resting on her, she gave the pony to the servant, who hastened to take him, and flew like a bird to her mother's feet. She seated herself on the footstool, and taking the magazine from her mother's knees began to make fun by conversing with the gentlemen and ladies in the prints of the fashions. The faces of these ideals having, as is well known, the advantage of a general resemblance to all men, though differing from them in some characteristic qualities, the girl found no great difficulty in discovering countless resemblances to the various friends of the family, and in addressing the pictures accordingly. The mother smiled at her daughter's childish jokes, and said at last, thinking aloud, "Leonora, you are becoming a great girl, and yet continue so very childish; we have left you too much to the tuition of the nurse and tutor, it is time to think of giving you some more fitting education, my poor child."

"I thought that I was ending my education," answered Leonora, sulkily.

"Your French accent is still bad, and your father wishes you to practise your drawing; you have some talent for it."

"I draw only caricatures," exclaimed Leonora; "they are easiest: I make a long nose and short legs, and so produce a comical figure."

"You are not to draw caricatures," said her mother; "it spoils your taste and makes you satirical."

Leonora hung down her head.

"And who was the young man with whom you were walking in the garden?" continued the mother, severely. "You gave him, too, some of your father's strawberries."

"Don't scold me, dear mother," she answered, blushing; "the stranger was a nice civil boy; he was going to town; he has neither father nor mother, and I pitied him, he was so modest; do not be angry with me:" she said this coaxingly, and put her arms round her mother's neck, whose eyes spoke more of love than anger.

The mother kissed her child, and said kindly, "You are a good but sadly-wild girl; now look for your father, his coffee will be cold."

When the baron entered the bower, his mind still engrossed with the conversation which had passed between him and Ehrenthal, the baroness laying her hand on his, said, "Oscar, I am anxious about Leonora."

"Is she ill?" inquired the father, surprised.

"She is healthy, and her heart is good, but she is bolder and freer in her manners than is becoming at her age."

"She has grown up in the country and become a hardy lass," answered the baron, in a consoling tone.

"But she is wanting in good manners and in refinement of feeling in her intercourse with strangers," continued the mother. "I fear she is in danger of becoming an original."

"Well, the misfortune would not be so very great," said the baron, laughing.

"There can scarcely be a greater for a girl in our sphere. What

is peculiar in society becomes laughable, too; a small touch of oddity may spoil her whole future life. She must be more guarded in her conduct, but I fear she will never learn that in the country."

"Should we send our child away from us, perhaps for years, and let her be developed among strangers?" asked the baron, angrily.

"And yet it must be," said the baroness, seriously, "though it costs me much to tell you so. She is rude with girls of her own age, inconsiderate towards older ladies, and forward with men. Can you fancy a girl of Leonora's manners at court?" inquired the baroness, after a pause.

Her husband could not fancy it, perhaps because a court is not exactly the place where precocious young ladies carry about their school-books, and play at hide-and-seek.

"She will change," he replied at last.

"She will not change," rejoined the baroness, laying her hand upon his shoulder, "so long as your darling rides with her father over hedges and ditches, and accompanies him hunting."

"I cannot bear to lose both our children," said the father, kindly. "It would be too hard upon us, especially upon you."

"Perhaps so," said the baroness, in a low voice, and her eyes were moistened with tears. "But we ought not to think of ourselves, only of our children's future."

The baron saw the emotion of his beloved wife; he pressed her to his heart, and said resolutely, "Listen to me, Elizabeth. When in former years we spoke of what we should do when this time arrived, we had other ideas about Leonora's education. We will pass the winter ourselves in town, to give the last finish to the child's education, and that she may enter into society under your auspices. You shall not be parted from her. We will go to the capital this very next winter."

Surprised and touched, the baroness rose from her seat, and exclaimed, "My good Oscar! But—pardon the question—would not such a life be in other respects a great sacrifice for you?"

"No!" said the baron cheerfully; "I have plans which make it desirable for me to pass the winter in town."

He explained his views, and the removal to the capital was settled.

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## CHAPTER IV

THE sun was already low in the horizon when the two travellers reached the capital. First they came to small detached houses, then to elegant villas in the midst of beautiful gardens; then the houses stood thicker together, till at last they closed into streets, which, together with the noise and dust of the carriages, gave a feeling of oppression and anxiety to our hero. Anthony would have been lost in the labyrinth of large and small streets if his companion, who, having great respect for Anthony's better coat, walked some paces behind, had not guided him, by calling out to the right or left at each turn. Veitel Itzig had a marked preference for crooked bye-streets and narrow trottoirs; and as he walked behind his fellow-traveller, he nodded here and there, with impudent confidence, to smartly-dressed women standing at the doors, or to lads with hooked noses and

round eyes, who loitered about the streets with their hands in their pockets. Sometimes his salute was answered by a careless nod, which meant to convey, "He is a good fellow, but has not a penny;" generally his civilities were received with cold contempt, which the loungers of dirty bye-streets know how to manifest to those from whom nothing is to be got, as well as the moustached hero of the well-paved streets of the more fashionable quarter. At last the two young men turned into a main street, where large houses with pillared porticoes, fine shops, and a throng of well-dressed people, showed that wealth had gained the complete mastery over poverty. In this street they stopped in front of a high house. Itzig pointed to the door with a certain air of shy respect, and said shortly, "Here he lives; here thou wilt soon become as proud as those *giaours* are. If thou shouldst ever wish to know where I am to be found, ask at Herr Ehrenthal's office in Tanner Row. Good-night!" Then he sauntered down the street whistling, without again looking round.

Anthony entered the house with beating heart, and felt for his father's letter in his waistcoat pocket. His courage failed him, and his head was so giddy, that he would have been glad to sit down and rest for a moment. But there was nothing in the house that promised repose. Before the door was a large waggon; within the house immense barrels and bales; and gigantic, broud-shouldered men, with leather aprons, and short iron hooks in their girdles, rattled chains, rolled barrels, and corded bales firmly together; amongst them clerks were hurrying to and fro, with pens behind their ears and papers in their hands, and carriers in blue frocks received the papers, bales, and barrels, with that business-like importance which generally denotes the activity of responsible men. This was no place of rest. Anthony ran against a bale, nearly stumbled over a crane, and was with difficulty saved, by two sons of Anak exclaiming, "Look before you!" from the fate of being crushed under a big oil-barrel.

In the centre of all this movement, like a sun round which the barrels, and workmen, and drivers were revolving, stood a young clerk, a gentleman of decided countenance and laconic words, who held a large black brush in his hand as a sign of his authority, with which he painted gigantic hieroglyphics on the bales, and then directed the movements of the packers in their work. Anthony asked this gentleman, with a faltering voice, for the head of the house, and, by a quick movement of the brush-handle, was shown the way to the office, which was situated at the back part of the hall. Slowly he moved to the door, and he often remembered in later days how much resolution it cost him to turn the handle. And when the door opened noiselessly, and he looked into the faint light of the large office, he became so nervous that he could scarcely cross the threshold. His entrance was little noticed. Half-a-dozen pens were gliding rapidly over blue sheets, to finish the last lines before the close of the office, and post-time. Only one of the clerks, who was sitting nearest the door, rose, and inquired in a cool, business-like tone, "What is your pleasure?"

Upon Anthony answering timidly that he wished to speak to Herr Schroeter, a tall gentleman, on whose face deep lines of thought might be traced, with a stiff shirt-collar, looking like an Englishman, stepped out of the inner office. Anthony glanced hastily at his coun-

tenance, and this first glance, timid and fleeting as it was, restored to him a good portion of his courage. He thought he saw there all that he had been longing to find since his father's death—a kind heart and an upright mind. And yet there was a severe expression in his countenance, and the tone of his first question sounded sharp and decided. Anthony quickly produced his letter, told his name, and related hastily and with faltering voice that his father was dead, and from his death-bed had sent his parting salutation to him.

A kind smile passed over the merchant's features; he silently opened the letter, and read it slowly, and shaking hands with Anthony, who was deeply moved, said, "Welcome to my house!" He then turned to one of the clerks, who wore a green coat and had a grey oversleeve fastened round his right arm, and said, "Herr Anthony Wohlfart enters from this day into our house." For a moment the six pens stopped, and those who held them fixed their eyes upon Anthony; but the master continued quickly to him, "You will be tired; Herr Jordan will show you to your room. Repose yourself to-day; we will talk further to-morrow."

After these words he turned away from Anthony, nodding slightly to him, and returned to the inner office, when the six pens began to glide again over the blue sheets, and with such rapidity, that their crests bristled up with amazement, for the old clock against the wall had already given warning that it was going to strike.

The gentleman with the green coat alone ceased writing, pulled off his grey over-sleeve, folded it carefully, and locked it up with a parcel of papers in his desk, at the same time begging Anthony to follow him to his room. Anthony repassed the door of the office, in which he had only been ten minutes, and yet came out quite another man; his fate was decided, he had again a home, he belonged to this great house. So elated was he, that he gave a good thump in passing to one of the large bales, as if he were slapping an old friend on the shoulder; hearing this, the green-coated gentleman turned round, and said, with benevolent condescension, "Cotton;" then, a few steps further, Anthony gave a rap upon a huge barrel standing comfortably in a corner, like a stout farmer in his light-coloured summer dress; whereupon the other turned again with the same benevolence, and said, "Currants." Our Anthony now no longer ran against the cranes, but even pushed them out of the way with a vigorous motion of his foot; he also greeted one of the giants with the leather aprons whom he chanced to meet, and received the polite thanks of the giant with great complacency, especially when the green-coated gentlemen condescendingly explained that it was "the head packer."

They passed across the yard, along intricate paths to the back part of the building, and ascended three flights of steps rather the worse for wear. There Herr Jordan opened the door of a room, which he informed Anthony would probably be his future abode, and that it had been inhabited by a friend of his who had left the house to set up for himself. The room was small, the furniture simple and not new; but there were clean white curtains and white blinds to the windows, and on the writing-table a beautiful cat made of plaster, with a yellow leather-coloured varnish over it, which gave it an appearance of life; it had been left by the former possessor of the room, for the benefit of his successor.

Herr Jordan hastened back to the office, where it was his duty to be the first and the last, a part of the keys being entrusted to him, and Anthony remained alone. With the help of a good-natured servant, who soon succeeded in making the room habitable for him, he arranged his toilet, and was just ready, when the sound of steps on the stairs announced to him that his colleagues were hastening from the office to their rooms.

Again the green-coated gentleman made his appearance, and imparted to him that Herr Schroeter was gone to a meeting, and would not see him again that night. He added that, in his opinion, it would be right for the new-comer to wait upon the different gentlemen, in order to introduce himself to their acquaintance in a becoming manner. An evening coat he said would not be necessary.

Anthony descended some stairs with his companion, and was on the point of knocking at a door, when it was opened by the occupant of the room. He was a handsome, slender young man of middle size, and with an air that had an imposing effect on our hero. He had just changed his attire, wore shorts and top-boots, and a jockey-cap upon his head. He had a whip in his hand, which he kept swinging about in a jaunty manner.

"Are you already leading your foal about by the halter?" said the young gentleman in top-boots, with a smile, to Anthony's conductor. Herr Jordan placed himself in a stately attitude, and presented: "Herr Wohlfart, the new under-clerk, just arrived"—"Herr von Fink, son of the great firm of Fink and Becker, at Hamburg."

"Heir of the largest store of train-oil in the world, and so forth," interrupted Herr von Fink, with a tone of indifference. "Jordan, give me ten thalers; I want to pay my groom; put it down with the rest." Without any hesitation, Jordan took a bank-note from his pocket-book, and presented it to the jockey, who crumpled it up, and put it carelessly into his waistcoat pocket. He then turned to Anthony, and said politely, "If you came to pay me a visit, as from the solemn face of your Mercury I conclude you did, I am very sorry not to be at home to-day, as I am going to buy a new horse. I will consider your visit as paid, and thank you for it with all proper solemnity, and I give you my blessing upon your entrance into our house." He nodded with an air of indifference, and walked down the stairs, and over the stone pavement in the court, clattering with his spurs.

Anthony's self-complacency received a severe blow from the cool demeanour of the young gentleman, and he thought with alarm of the difficulty he should have in living with them, if the other members of the office were like him. Herr Jordan also thought it necessary to explain the extraordinary manner of the jockey, and said with confidential dignity, "Fink only half belongs to our office; he has been with us but a short time; he was sent here by his father from New York, to bring him to his senses."

"Has he lost them, then?" inquired Anthony, with curiosity.

"Only a little too wild, and fond of banter, but he is otherwise a good companion," said Herr Jordan. "The other gentlemen I have invited to meet you in my room, that you may make their acquaintance; we shall have tea there. To-morrow you can visit them in their respective rooms."

Herr Jordan's room was the largest of the small apartments, in the

part of the house in which the clerks of the office lived; and for that reason, as well as for the agreeable qualities of its occupant, was often used as a sitting-room. It enjoyed the distinction of being provided with a piano and several easy-chairs. Against the windows hung a number of transparent porcelain pictures, in which the noble nature of woman was represented, in the persons of pious church-goers, and Madonnas in the style of the Middle Ages. In this room the gentlemen were awaiting the arrival of the new-comer. Anthony went through the introduction with success, first shaking hands with each member of the society, and then appealing to their benevolence, begged for their kind assistance, as he was quite inexperienced in business, had mixed little with other men, and knew nothing of the world. This frankness did not fail to produce a favourable impression. A friendly conversation ensued, seasoned with jokes and mysterious allusions, which were quite unintelligible to the novice. Anthony remained silent, and occupied himself in endeavouring to find out the characters of the different gentlemen. There was the book-keeper, Herr Liebold, an elderly little man, with a small voice, and a modest smile, which seemed to ask everybody's pardon for taking the liberty to exist. He spoke little; but when he did, there was one remarkable peculiarity in his conversation—he retracted in the last part of his speech what he had maintained in the first. For instance, "I almost think the tea too weak, but strong tea, indeed, is very unhealthy," and so on. There was Herr Pix, the despotical wielder of the black brush in the hall, a decided character, who seemed disposed to consider all human relations as retail business, respectable, perhaps, but trivial. As there was a chair wanting in the room, he disdainfully pushed a small table near to that on which the tea was laid, swung himself across it, and remained sitting astride there the whole evening. Then there was Herr Specht, who talked a great deal, and started strong propositions which every one disputed. He maintained that China was governed by a constitution differing very little from the English, and defended vehemently the opinion that snail-soup was the favourite dish of the late Emperor Napoleon. Besides these, there was Herr Bauman, a slim gentleman, with short-cut hair, and a thoughtful, serious turn of mind, who went to church every Sunday, took a part in all missionary societies, and, as all his colleagues told him, had the intention of becoming some day himself a missionary. He delayed it, however, from a kind of childish habit of attachment to Germany, and the firm for whom he was working. Anthony remarked with pleasure the kind and considerate tone that pervaded the small society. Being tired, he wished them soon a good night; and as he had contradicted no one, and been civil to all, it was agreed on all hands after his departure that he promised to be a good colleague.

Meanwhile, Veitel Itzig passed through the throng of men and maze of streets, with the indifference of a loungeur and the assurance of an inhabitant. The red glow of the evening had left the pavement, and now lighted up the houses from one window to another, as high as the roofs, and the darkness of evening began to fill the narrow streets of the old quarter of the town situated near the river. In one of these streets stood a large house with a broad façade to it. The windows of the ground-floor were latticed with iron bars, within the splendid white window-frames of the first floor were large panes of



glass. Under the roof were sham windows, dirty, and here and there with a broken pane. There was nothing good about the appearance of the house; it looked like an old gipsy woman, who had thrown a new bright-coloured shawl over her beggar's dress.

Into this house Veitel Itzig entered, kissing his hand at the door to a tawdry-dressed housemaid, who, with an expressive gesture, put it away from her, like a wasp coming too near. A flight of dirty stairs led to a white varnished door, upon which, on a large brass plate, was the name of "Hirsch Ehrenthal." Veitel laid hold of the big china handle, and rang the bell. An elderly woman in a tumbled cap opened the door just sufficiently to poke her nose out, and inquire what he wanted; after receiving his answer, she banged open the door of a room, and called out, "There is some one here; his name is Itzig Veitel, from Ostrau; he wishes to speak with Hirsch Ehrenthal." The voice of the master of the house was heard from the room, "He must wait!" and the clattering of plates announced that the man of business wished to enjoy his family supper, before he admitted the future millionaire to an audience. The woman cast a suspicious glance upon the stranger, dashed the door to again, and shut him out.

Veitel seated himself on the stairs, fixed his eyes admiringly on the brass plate and the white door, and tried to fancy how the name of Itzig would look on such a plate on a similar door. This idea led him at once to the consideration of how much he required to enable him to become as rich as Hirsch Ehrenthal. He put his hand upon the half-dozen ducats which his old mother had sewn in a piece of leather in the lining of his waistcoat, and calculated how much he could increase them daily, provided the rich man would leave him the opportunity of gaining something. He was deeply absorbed in meditation on the price of a pair of fancy boots, which he imagined on the feet of some young dandy, and which he believed to be worth treble the value of the four groschens he proposed to offer the smart gentleman, when the door was opened, and Herr Ehrenthal stood before the poor lad. It was no longer the man we have seen this same afternoon; the insinuating smile had faded away like the fragrancy of the rose at the close of a hot day; he was all self-sufficiency, dignity, and despotism. No Asiatic Sultan could look so haughtily on the poor creature at his feet as he did on the child from Ostrau. Itzig felt the importance of the great man's position, and his own insignificance, in spite of the six ducats in the leather purse; he rose up hastily, and stood before his master. "There is a letter written by Baruch Goldmann, from whom Herr Ehrenthal required me for his business," began Veitel, and presented the letter to the great man.

"I wrote to Goldmann to send me some one to look at, that I might judge whether he would suit me; there is nothing settled yet," said Ehrenthal, with dignity, and opened the letter.

"Well, I came to be looked at," replied Veitel.

"And why do you come so late, young Itzig? It is too late to talk on business," snarled out the master of the house.

"I wished to place myself at Herr Hirsch Ehrenthal's service to-night, in case he had any commission to give me for to-morrow morning!"

"We can speak about that to-morrow morning," the other answered, angrily, thinking it advantageous to show the novice how

little value he set upon him. Itzig understood perfectly the object of this behaviour; and seeing that his position in the bargain that was to be made was not as yet a favourable one, he endeavoured to improve it, by entering more deeply into the subject. "I can perhaps do you some service to-morrow morning, as it is market-day, for I know most of the gentlemen's coachmen who come with the rape to town."

"What about rape? what have I to do with rape? why do you pretend to talk about business?" roared out Herr Ehrenthal, growing still more savage.

But Veitel remained unmoved, and continued to puff himself, as one might a silk handkerchief. "I am also known in the town in other ways. I know the pawnbrokers and small tradespeople, and can assist my master in any business he wishes to transact, either within or without his house." Then, in order to bring this sale of himself nearer to a conclusion, he added, with an air of resignation, "I am not so presuming as to expect to lodge in the house with Herr Ehrenthal; if Herr Ehrenthal has no room for me, I can get a bed at a small inn in the neighbourhood.

Herr Ehrenthal was so touched by this humility that he eyed the lad once more from top to toe with greater attention than before, and asked him, with some condescension, "Are you sure that your papers are in order, that you may not get me into any trouble with the police?"

Veitel reassured him on this weighty point; a large old pocket-book made its appearance suddenly, in a mysterious way, from underneath the folds of his loose jacket, out of which he drew his passport.

Herr Ehrenthal took the paper with a well-feigned repugnance to its yellow colour, and looked at it carefully, signature, seal, and every part of it, even holding it before the candle. Veitel watched anxiously whether he would keep the document; if he did, the bargain was concluded.

While Herr Ehrenthal balanced the document in his hand with an air of indifference, Itzig tried to put on a smile of submissive confidence. "If I take you into my service," said the former, "you will have to do in my house whatever I shall bid you, or Madame Ehrenthal, or my son Bernhard Ehrenthal; you will clean the boots in the morning, and my wife's shoes; you will fetch for the kitchen what the cook desires you; you will do all the errands necessary for my business, and all commissions."

"I will, Herr Ehrenthal," said Veitel, humbly; "I will do all that I can to content you."

"The cook will give you your breakfast and dinner; in the evening, after seven o'clock, you may be your own master."

Veitel accepted this condition also with the same readiness, and only remarked, "Can I not have an hour or two in the morning to myself?"

"No," said Ehrenthal, ungraciously, "I cannot allow any one who is in my service to do business on their own account."

Veitel having settled with himself at any rate to do business for himself, which Herr Ehrenthal knew as well as Veitel, this delicate point was dropped.

"For this you shall have two thalers every month, and when I do any business with your assistance, you will receive your share."

"How large is my share to be?" quickly exclaimed Veitel.

"How large is it to be?" repeated Ehrenthal, indignantly. "Whatever I shall give you will be large enough."

"Large enough for my master, but not for me," answered Veitel, boldly, for he felt that on this main point resolution was needed.

"We shall see about that when you have gone through your probation; a month will be your time of trial; after that I will talk with you about your profits."

This was all that Veitel could fairly ask for. He lifted his bundle up from the stairs, and said submissively, "I am content, if Herr Ehrenthal will also make me a present of a pair of old trousers and an old coat, that I may not disgrace him in the eyes of other people."

"No coat and no trousers," answered the other with decision.

"Then give me the trousers and coat in a month, when my trial is over." This demand, according to the rate of exchange among the dealers in old clothes, was equal to a present of three or four thalers, and Ehrenthal justly deemed the demand exorbitant. He gave one more searching look at the lad, marked the humility of his attitude contrasted with the uncommonly impudent expression of his eyes, came to the conclusion that he might be useful to him, and therefore was moved to make a show of generosity. "Be it so," he concluded, "in a month. You can take up your quarters for the present with Loebel Pinkus, at the corner, that I may know where you are to be found." After these words, Herr Ehrenthal opened an inner door, and called out, "Wife, Bernhard, Rosalie." The doors of two rooms and the kitchen door opened, the whole family made their appearance, and behind them the untidy cook.

Madame Ehrenthal was a somewhat corpulent lady, dressed in black silk, with thick eyebrows and raven black curls, who laid herself out to please, and succeeded in doing so—at least, so she was assured, with more or less civility, by certain young noblemen, who called from time to time upon Herr Ehrenthal of a morning to do business with him, and though these assurances used to be warmer, the cooler Ehrenthal behaved with respect to the business in hand; yet, to tell the truth, Madame Ehrenthal passed for a very dignified dame in the eyes of those who did not wish to renew their bills of exchange.

But her daughter was really a beauty: a tall, commanding figure, with brilliant eyes, a fine, clear complexion, and a nose only slightly hooked. As to the son, it was difficult to understand how he could belong to the family; he was short, his face was pale and emaciated, and his body very much bent; his mouth and the clear expression of his eyes alone showed him to be still young; he was also more negligently dressed than became the son of Herr Ehrenthal, and though it was evening, his brown hair looked as if it had not been brushed.

The family and Veitel looked at each other in silence, while Herr Ehrenthal stated, in a tone of great self-importance, "This is Veitel Itzig, whom I have taken into our service." The haughty stateliness of the mother, the daughter's look of displeasure, and the absent expression of the son, were all as cleverly caught by the poor lad as the variegated rays of a prism are by an observing philosopher; and

he resolved on the spot to be very submissive to the mother, to fall in love with the daughter, to clean Bernhard's boots badly, and search his pockets when he brushed his coats, to see whether the negligent owner had, perchance, left a piece of money there.

After this introduction Herr Ehrenthal told Veitel he might go, and was to return there at six o'clock the next morning. The door of the room shut upon the lad, and he stood on the stairs with the proud consciousness that he had become connected with the business, and was an incipient trader. He smiled with delight as he descended the stairs; he was evidently satisfied with his bargain. Had he not measured himself with the great master of the profession, and gained something like an advantage over him? For, as he would have engaged himself on any terms, even without the addition of the wardrobe, he rightly considered the old coat and trousers, which were due in a month's time, as an agreeable over-reaching of his new master. The reflection, "it will be but a summer coat," passed like a dark shadow over his mind; "but the trousers will be Bernhard's, who wears them of cloth even this hot summer's day." Thus tranquillized, he carried his bundle round the corner to Loebel Pinkus.

Loebel Pinkus was proprietor of a house, on the ground-floor of which he kept a much-frequented spirit-shop. Yet it was evident that neither the round figure of honest Pinkus himself, shining with grease, nor his wife's thick necklace, derived their substantial splendour from the spirit trade alone, and their neighbours racked their brains to discover how Frau Pinkus could afford to roast always the most expensive geese, or even sometimes a turkey. Nevertheless, as her husband was a man of resolute character, coarse and decided in all his words, as he sold brandy, which was always considered a sign of liberal principles, and as, besides, he knew how to lend money at unusual per centage, he was much respected and feared by the small work-people of the neighbourhood. Indeed, he was in great repute. The policemen as they passed his shop liked to step in and drink a glass of brandy, for which he regularly refused to accept any payment, he paid punctually his taxes, and passed for a friend, indeed, for a confidant of the executive power. But in truth Herr Pinkus was one of those happy dispositions, that know how to extract honey from every flower, even from those that smelt badly. On the first floor of his house he kept quiet lodgings for men with and without beards, who had an invincible hatred for all that derived its origin from the porcine breed. These men of primeval family often prized a cheap and obscure resting-place, where the landlord did not run up bills, nor ask for passports. They used to arrive late in the evening, and slink out into the streets of the town or high-roads early in the morning, as modest pedlars and chafferers, who counted their gains by groschens and pfennigs. Besides these regular guests, there appeared sometimes another class, irregular as comets, of every age, sex, and faith; they transacted their business with the landlord in the greatest secrecy, and could not bear to have a match lighted close to them. The old customers of Pinkus had their own opinions respecting these peculiarities, but did not think it advisable to waste many words on the subject.

Itzig groped his way in the dark up the stairs and along the dirty walls of this house, till at last he came against a heavy oak door with

a huge lock, which he succeeded in opening by a violent push, and entered into a desolate room which occupied almost the whole length of the house. In the middle of it stood an old table, on which was a bad lamp, and round it some wooden stools; opposite the entrance door was a large partition wall with a number of small doors in it, some of them stood open, and discovered to the observer, that the whole of the partition was divided into narrow compartments, separated from each other and fitted up with wooden hooks and shelves. The faded blinds of the small windows that looked on the street were drawn down; on the side of the room opposite the windows the rays of the setting sun penetrated through an open door—this door led to a wooden balcony, which ran along the house the whole length of the taproom.

Itzig threw his bundle into a cupboard, and stepped on to the balcony. Finding no one there, he began to observe the view with about the same degree of interest that a Dutch painter of architecture would feel, but not quite with the same object. A rapid river rolled its muddy waters at the foot of the house, forming a narrow canal, bordered on both sides by decayed wooden houses. Every house had similar wooden balconies to each floor, supported by beams blackened with age. Often there were three or four ranges of balconies one above the other, so that the floor of the upper one formed the eaves of the lower. In olden times the honourable guild of tanners had occupied these buildings, then the woodwork was new and polished, lambskins and goatskins hung from the rails, till they became soft and pliable enough to furnish gloves for the patricians, and leather bags for their wives. Now-a-days the tanners had removed to more remote quarters of the town; and instead of skins, the clothes of poor people hanging out to dry covered the broken carved work and worm-eaten capitals of the pillars which adorned the balconies. The bright and varied colours of the clothes were thrown out prominently by the glow of the evening sun, and contrasted strikingly with the dark woodwork; and the light was beautifully reflected from the pillars and prominences of the balconies, the rude arabesques on the frames, and the dark posts which rose here and there from the water. It was a gloomy abode for any living creature, only fit for painters, cats, or poor devils.

Master Itzig had already been several times in this house, but always in company. He now observed that a long covered flight of steps descended from the end of the balcony down to the water; he perceived also that there was in close proximity to this a similar one from the neighbouring house, and he concluded that it would be possible to descend one and mount the other without wetting more than one's shoes; he discovered further that in the summer time, when the water was low, it was possible to walk a long distance between the houses and the water, and he reflected whether there were not people to whom such a walk, by day or night, might be useful. There was at least no fear of watchmen or police there. These considerations excited his imagination to such a degree that he hastened back to the room, crept into one of the small compartments behind the wooden partition, which was open, and examined all the walls by knocking at and shaking them. To his astonishment, he discovered that the back wall also was of wood and sounded hollow.

As on that side the stone wall ought to run which would separate this house from the next, the hollow sound appeared to him suspicious and out of rule, and he was on the point of making an assault on a locked-up cupboard, to try whether some crevice in the wood of the back part would not afford him further explanation, when he heard a low grumbling, which made him withdraw his hand from the door. He turned round, and saw, but without evincing any great shame, that he was no longer alone. In a corner of the room a Gallician trader lay cowering on a straw bed, wrapped up in his caftan, and a black cap on his head. He had locked up his luggage in the closet that was in danger of an assault, and thought it necessary to protest against the researches instigated by the curiosity of the intruder. Itzig endeavoured to begin a conversation with the stranger, but as the latter showed more disposition to sleep than to talk, he sat down in the opposite corner, on another straw bed and remained there, his restless spirit calculating and devising bargains, which sometimes so excited his imagination that he tossed about his hands and arms, till at length the darkness of night came on, and the small lamp flickered and threatened to go out. Then Pinkus, the landlord himself, came in with a light in his hand; he examined the number of his guests, put a jug of water on the table, and, as he left the room, locked the door from without. Itzig, now in the dark, took a piece of dry bread from his pocket, and at last, lying down on the straw, with his old jacket over him, in spite of the snoring of his companion, he fell asleep.

At the same time, his fellow-traveller in the patrician house wrapped himself up in the quilted coverlid of his bed, looked once more, with weary eyes, round his room, and being half-asleep, saw the yellow cat on the writing-table move its limbs, begin to stroke its face with its paws, and then kiss them both to him. Ere he had time to reflect on this extraordinary act of kindness, he fell asleep. Before the eyes of both youths was drawn the web of grey gauze, upon which the goddess of dreams paints her variegated pictures. Anthony saw himself sitting on a huge bale of goods, and flying through the air, while a certain young lady stretched out her arms towards him; and Veitel Itzig discovered with delight that he had become a baron, of whom Hirsch Ehrenthal was obliged to beg alms. He imagined he made old Ehrenthal a present of his six ducats, who thanked him in a plaintive tone. But he was so frightened at this generosity, even in his dream, that he began to struggle with both hands and feet.

The following morning both the young men began their active life. Anthony sat in his place at the counter, copying letters; and Veitel, after having cleaned all the boots and shoes of the Ehrenthal family, and searched Bernhard's pockets, was standing as a spy at the door of the first hotel in the town, in order to watch a gentleman from the country, who was dissatisfied with Ehrenthal, and suspected of having employed other men of business in his room. Anthony, by copying letters, obtained some knowledge of the style and language of his business; and Veitel, while lurking outside the hotel, was lucky enough to get the address of a student passing by, who found it convenient to sell his silver watch.

Anthony made use of his first leisure hours to draw the castle, the

creepers, the balcony, and turrets from memory, on the best paper with which that great town could furnish him. He had the drawing put in a gilt frame, and hung it over his couch.

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## CHAPTER V

ANTHONY had some difficulty at first in familiarizing himself with the new world into which he had been transplanted. The buildings, household, and business, were all so old-fashioned, and substantial, and on such a grand scale, that they would have had an imposing effect, even on a person of more experience.

This commercial house traded in all kinds of goods, a thing becoming more and more rare in these days, when railroads and telegraphs unite sea and land, and when every merchant in a maritime town sells his goods through his agent, far inland, almost before they have arrived in the harbour—so rare, that our descendants will look upon this kind of trade almost as we should the market transactions of Timbuctoo, or those in a kraal of the Caffres. Yet there was a proud, even a princely character about this old and far-famed inland commerce, and, what was of more value, it was calculated to produce, in those who were employed in it, steadiness of mind and self-respect. For in those days, the sea being far distant, the opportunities were more rare and greater; the merchant had to take a wider range in his calculations, and to be more independent in his speculations. The importance of a commercial house depended, then, on the quantities of goods it had purchased with its own money, and kept in store at its own risk. A great part of the foreign goods were piled up in extended warehouses lying along the river, a smaller portion was preserved in the cellars and vaults of the old house itself, and the rest stowed away in the neighbouring granaries and coach-houses. Innumerable retail dealers supplied themselves with colonial goods, and thousands of foreign products, which have become the necessaries of daily life, from the magazines of our Firm. Agents were located beyond the frontier of the country, south and east, as far as the Turkish boundary, and this part of the business, though perhaps less regular and secure, was considered the most lucrative.

Thus the daily transactions presented to the mind of the new under-clerk a multitude of various impressions, and brought him in contact with men and circumstances of all sorts. Besides the agents from the maritime places, who almost daily brought patterns of goods, and the brokers, by whom the money concerns of the house were transacted, a mixed procession of all kinds of people passed through the principal office from morning to night. There came grocers from the provinces, old-fashioned men, with every description of cap, and every degree of civilization and assurance, who bought, and shook hands, and claimed to be treated as intimate friends of the Firm; then there were country gentlemen from the neighbourhood, of every rank, who offered the produce of their estates for sale, such as plants, from which dyes are extracted, spices, etc.; there were also Polish Jews, with black curls, dressed in long silk caftans, who sometimes made purchases, but generally came to sell the products of their

country—wool, hemp, potash, and tallow. The traffic with these went on in a most unbusiness-like manner, and their arrival always excited great merriment amongst the younger clerks. Mixed up with these came beggars and petitioners of all kinds, correspondents of the house, carriers asking for their invoices, packers, and servants to receive orders, or do commissions for other houses. Anthony found it very difficult to keep his ideas clear, and finish the easy work which was assigned to him, in the midst of this continual bustle and talking.

Just at this moment Herr Braun comes in, the agent of a correspondent's house in Hamburg, and takes sundry samples of coffee from his pocket; and whilst the head of the house examines them, the active little agent keeps flourishing his gold-headed cane before Anthony's eyes, and telling of a storm at sea, and the damage it had done. The door creaks, and a poorly-clad woman enters. Herr Specht rises from his stool, and asks, "What do you want?" A piteous sound is heard that resembles somewhat the wailing of a sick hen, the merchant quickly puts his hand into his pocket, and the wailing changes into a comfortable clucking.

"Waves as high as the house," cries the agent.

"God reward you a thousand times!" clucks the woman.

"Makes 550 marks, 10 shillings," says Herr Bauman to the master.

Now the door is hastily thrown open, and a stout man enters with a money-bag under his arm, which he puts triumphantly on a marble table, exclaiming, with the expression of one who has accomplished a good work, "Here I am, and here is the money!"

Upon this, Herr Jordan rises, and says in a confidential tone, "Good morning, Herr Stephan. What news from Wolfsburg?"

"A fearful leak," groans out Herr Braun.

"Where?" inquires Fink.

"It is not a bad place, but there is little industry," says Herr Stephan.

"Of course in the body of the ship," answers Herr Braun.

"Seventy-five bags of Cuba," remarks the Principal, in answer to a question from one of the clerks.

Whilst Herr Stephan tells the news of his town, and amongst other things the sad story of an apprentice who had shot himself with a pistol made of a key, and while Jordan listens patiently to this necessary introduction to an impending negotiation, the door opens again, a servant enters, and a Jew from Brody. The servant brings the Principal an invitation to dinner, and the Jew sneaks into the corner where Fink sits.

"Why do you return, Schmiei Tinkeles?" asks Fink coldly; "I have already told you that we will not deal with you."

"Not deal with me!" the unhappy Tinkeles groans out, in horrible German, which Anthony had great difficulty in understanding. "There has not been such wool as I bring in the country before."

"How much the hundredweight?" asks Fink, writing on without looking at the Jew.

"What I have said before," answered the Jew.

"You are a fool," says Fink; "begone!"

"No pilot can help her," says Herr Braun.

"My compliments to the counsellor," says the merchant.



"He lighted the key-pistol with a match," exclaims Herr Stephan, casting up his eyes to the sky.

"Alack!" cries the man in the caftan, "what do you mean by begone? Begone does no business."

"Then what will you take for your wool?"

"41 $\frac{1}{2}$ ," says Tinkeles.

"Be off!" answers Fink.

"Don't say always, 'Be off!'" implores the Jew, in despair. "Tell me, sir; what will you give?"

"If you make such impudent demands, nothing," says Fink, beginning a new page of his letter.

"Only tell me, please, what will you give?" entreats the Jew again.

"When you speak like a reasonable man," answers Fink, looking at the Jew.

"I am reasonable," says the Jew gently; "what will you give?"

"39," says Fink.

Schmiei Tinkeles seems now almost beside himself, shakes his black curls, and swears loudly by the salvation of his soul he could not sell under 41; upon which Fink tells him that he will have him taken out of the room by one of the servants if he continues to make such a noise. Then the Jew indignantly leaves the room, but puts his head again through the half-open door, and calls out, "Well, what will you give?"

"39," says Fink, watching the gesticulations of the excited dealer with the same kind of interest that a natural philosopher regards the galvanic spasms of a frog. The number 39 causes a new explosion in the mind of the Jew; he condemns his soul to the deepest abyss of hell, and declares himself the most vile monster in the world if he should take less than 41. As he does not choose to attend to Fink's repeated admonitions to be quiet, the servant is called, whose appearance works as a composing draught upon him, so that he declares he will go by himself; he will go instantly, but stops, and says, "40 $\frac{1}{2}$ ." The agent, the man from the provinces, and the clerks listen with silent curiosity to the transaction, while Fink, in a somewhat more friendly tone, proposes to poor Schmiei to leave directly, as he is a fool, and there is no dealing with him. On this the Jew turns indignantly round, and walks off.

Now Herr Braun begins again: "This storm is a singular misfortune, for coffee must rise." And Herr Stephan affirms that suicide and other misdeeds have increased since the invention of matches. Fink says to the master, who is reading a letter he has in the meanwhile received, "If I add a thaler more, he will let us have it; will you agree to 39 $\frac{1}{2}$ ?"

"How much?" asks the merchant.

"120 hundredweight," says Fink.

"Take it," says the merchant, and goes on reading.

The door is again pushed open, the bustle continues, and Anthony tries in vain to understand how one can buy the wool after the seller has gone away in so determined a manner. Then there is a confusion of voices, as if three or four are all speaking pell-mell together, the door opens gently, Tinkeles sneaks in on tiptoe, and placing himself

behind Fink, lays his hand on his shoulder, and says in a confidential but piteous tone, "Now what will you give me?"

Fink turns round, and says, with an equally confidential smile, "Well, as it is you, Tinkeles, 39½, but only on one condition—that you don't say another word, otherwise I withdraw my offer."

"I will not speak," answered the Jew; "only say 40."

Fink makes a gesture of indignation, and points silently to the door. The dealer goes, but turns round when he gets to the door.

"Now he will come to the point," says Fink. The dealer comes back and says, with more decision, "39½, if you will take it at that rate?"

After a little hesitation, Fink says carelessly, "So be it." And now Schmiei Tinkeles is quite changed; he has become the best friend of the Firm, and inquires with the greatest interest after the health of the Principal.

After this interlude the door creaks again, new sellers and purchasers come in, the men talk, the pens scribble, and the money jingles incessantly.

The household also to which Anthony belonged appeared extraordinary and grand.

The building itself was an old and irregular structure, with side wings, small courts, and back buildings, with endless walls and small flights of stairs, mysterious passages where no one expected them, corridors, niches, deep closets, and glass partitions. It was an intricate kind of architecture, which centuries had been working at to render as unintelligible and difficult as possible for posterity. Yet, taken altogether, it looked respectable and comfortable, and contained within its walls a whole world of men and interests. The entire space under the building and its courts was occupied by vaulted cellars filled up to their keystones with goods. The whole ground-floor belonged to the business, and contained, besides the office-rooms, scarcely anything but store-rooms. Upstairs, in the front part of the house, were the saloon and the rooms occupied by the merchant himself. Herr Schroeter had been married only a short time; in one year he had lost his wife and child; and since the death of his parents his sister was his only remaining relation.

The merchant maintained strictly the ancient customs of the house. All the clerks and juniors who were not married lived in the house, belonged to his household, and dined at his table daily at one o'clock. The morning after Anthony's entrance, Herr Schroeter had only exchanged a few words with him, and then committed him to Herr Jordan, to be employed in the provincial branch of the business. A few minutes before dinner-time he was sent for to the rooms of the first-floor, to be presented to the lady of the house. Full of expectation as he ascended the well-carpeted staircase, the footman conducted him through a series of rooms to the drawing-room. On his way, Anthony observed with astonishment the simple but solid splendour of the furniture, the large mirrors, heavy damasks, pictures, flower-tables, numerous vases and fruit-baskets of stone and painted china. The footman drew aside a *portière*, and Anthony, as he stepped upon the polished parquet, made a profound bow, whilst the Principal presented him to a young lady, saying, "My sister Sabine."

Fraulein Sabine, attired in an elegant summer dress, had a delicate pale face, set off by the raven blackness of her hair. She was not older than Anthony, but had the dignity and manners of a lady accustomed to do the honours of a house. She motioned to him to sit down, and asked him kindly whether he had found his room comfortable, or wished for anything more.

"My sister rules over us all," said the merchant, looking with a good-natured smile at the young lady. "Come here to confession whenever you have a household wish; she is the good fairy who keeps the house in order."

Anthony looked up timidly at the fairy, and answered, "I find everything much more splendid than I have been accustomed to at home."

"I fear, however, that your life may, in the course of time, appear to you too uniform," continued the merchant; "there is very strict regularity in our house. You will have a great deal of work and little recreation. There are great demands on my time, even after the close of the office; but as often as you want advice or assistance in any matter, I beg of you to apply to me before any one else."

After this short audience he rose and led Anthony into the dining-room, and whilst going explained to him the position of an apprentice in the house. Anthony found his colleagues already there waiting for dinner, ranged in a file, and very plainly dressed. Sabine entered with an elderly lady, a distant relation of the family, who assisted her in housekeeping, and looked very good-humoured. The clerks made their bows to the ladies, and Anthony was shown his place at the end of a long table between his two youngest colleagues. Opposite to him sat Sabine, next to her brother; on the other side of her sat the relation, who was honoured by the title of aunt; by her, Herr von Fink; and then all the others according to their rank and seniority in the house. It was altogether a very quiet dinner. Anthony's neighbours talked but little, and in a low tone of voice. The conversation was almost entirely led by the merchant. Our friend the jockey of yesterday was the only one who seemed entirely at his ease. He related little laughable anecdotes, imitated other people's voices and manner to perfection, and paid almost exaggerated attention to the good-humoured aunt, so that Anthony, whose heart was brimful of respectful love and veneration, observed with a kind of pious dismay that Fink behaved as if the table had been laid only for him, and as if the merchant only carried on business in order to enable his volunteer to cut frivolous jokes, and talk with an air of easy assurance to everybody. At the same time, he thought he perceived that the merchant himself treated the young gentleman with great coldness, and also that Fink cared very little for the reserved manners of the master of the house. The servants, who were dressed in black, waited with great quickness and regularity; and when the gentlemen of the office rose from their seats and took their leave with profound bows, Anthony felt, as he left the room, that he had never dined in so distinguished and sumptuous a style before.

"I shall go on well with all except that Herr Fink," said Anthony to himself that day; "he is too forward and too proud; he actually remained sitting when all the rest of the clerks had risen. He is not in his proper place here," decided the new-comer, with a wisdom that

was more instinct than experience. From that time Anthony regarded Fink with a kind of awe. He could not help often looking at him, and thinking a good deal about him, for his gentlemanlike manners made a great impression on him. The nobly-formed head, small face, and delicate features; the easy confidence of his deportment, and his short, decided movements and words. Anthony hardly ventured to talk to him, and Fink gave him no opportunity of doing so, for he seemed to have forgotten the presence of the new apprentice. Once only, when Anthony accidentally ascended the stairs before Fink, the latter addressed him, "Well, Master Wohlfart, how do you like this establishment?"

Anthony stopped and said, as became a well-conditioned youth: "All is admirable! I hear and see so much that is new, that I can hardly realize it."

"You will become accustomed to it all," said Fink, laughing, "as goes one day, so goes the whole year. On Sunday one dish more, and a glass of wine before each remove, and you will have to put on your dress coat. You are now placed as a wheel in the machine, and you will be expected to turn round regularly the whole year."

"I know that I must work steadily to obtain Herr Schroeter's confidence," answered the little Philister, provoked by the rebellious spirit of the other.

"A truly meritorious remark," said Fink, sneeringly. "In a few weeks you will see, my poor boy, what an enormous difference there is between the head of the house, and those who write his letters and dispatch his customers. No prince in the world bears himself so proudly among his vassals, and lives so apart from them as this coffee king in his empire. But don't let my speeches trouble you," he continued, with somewhat more kindness; "every one in the house will tell you that I am an unaccountable being. But I take you to be a promising clerk, and will give you sincere good advice; get a good English teacher, and do not stay here till you get rusty. All that you can learn here, will not make you a man, if you have in you wherewith to become one. Good evening." So saying, Fink turned his back upon Anthony, and left him indignant at the tone of superiority assumed by the jockey.

After some time, however, our hero did feel, even in the midst of all the bustle of this business life, the perpetual monotony of the days and hours, and it wearied him, but it did not make him unhappy, for he had been accustomed to order and regularity with his parents, and this helped him over many a tedious hour.

Herr Jordan conscientiously exerted himself to initiate the apprentice into the secrets of the business, and Anthony's entrance into the magazines of the house, where he learnt the technical names of a hundred different stuffs and remarkable products, became to his impressionable mind the source of a peculiar poetical sentiment, which deserves the name as much as many other poetical sentiments, that spring from the mysterious charm produced in our minds by the wonderful and the strange.

It was a large gloomy vaulted room on the ground floor, scantily lighted by barred windows, in which lay the samples and small stores for daily use. Barrels, chests, and bales were piled together among

which you threaded your way through narrow and crooked paths. All the countries of the world, all the different races of mankind, had contributed to bring before the eyes of our hero all that was most useful and valuable. The floating palaces of the East India Company, the flying American clipper, and the old-fashioned ark of the Dutchman, had circumnavigated the globe, strong-built whalers had touched the icebergs of both poles with their prows, black steamers, gaily painted Chinese junks, light Malabar boats with a bamboo for a mast, had all of them spread their wings and struggled against wind and wave to fill those vaults. These mats of bark had been plaited by a Hindoo woman; yonder chest was painted by an industrious Chinese with red and black hieroglyphics; that reed twist had been bound over the bales by a negro from Congo in the service of a Virginian planter; this trunk of logwood was rolled along the sands formed by the waves of the Mexican Gulf; yonder square block of zebra or jacaranda wood had grown in the swampy primeval woods of Brazil, and monkeys and many-coloured parrots had sported upon its branches. The green fruit of the coffee-tree from almost every part of the world, was lying there in sacks and barrels; the twisted leaves of the tobacco-plant, the brown marrow of the palm-tree, and yellow crystals from the sweet cane of the plantations, were spread in baskets of rough bark. A hundred various plants had united here their wood, bark, buds, fruit, and the marrow and juice of their stems. Strange figures rose like monsters out of chaos behind the open barrel filled with orange-coloured liquid—it was palm-oil from the west coast of Africa; a clumsy animal might be seen reposing—it was tallow from Poland poured into the hide of a cow; by its side were lying five hundred cod-fish in a huge bale, compressed with cords and iron hoops, while in the opposite corner the jaws of a gigantic whale rose above a heap of elephants' teeth.

Anthony often stood for hours in the old hall, after the conclusion of his instructor's explanations, lost in curiosity and astonishment. The arches of the vaults and the pillars by the walls seemed to change into large leafy palm trees, and the buzz and noise of the streets appeared to him like the distant roaring of the sea, which he only knew in his dreams, and he heard the measured swell and dashing of the wave upon the shore, on which he stood so securely.

The pleasure that he derived from the foreign world into which he had so safely entered, never left him from that day. He took pains to learn the properties of the different wares, and endeavoured to acquire by reading, an accurate knowledge of the countries from which they came, and of the people who had collected them.

The first months of his life in town passed rapidly away, and it was fortunate for him that in his leisure hours he was thus enabled to hold intercourse with the whole world, for on one point Fink was right. In spite of the daily dinners in the fine dining-room, Anthony continued a stranger to the Principal and his ladies; he soon became aware that a barrier was raised between the gentlemen of the office and the members of the family, which, however unobserved by strangers, was yet impassable. He was so reasonable, that it did not enter into his head to grumble, but he often felt depressed by it, for with the enthusiasm of youth he was disposed to revere his chief as

the *beau idéal* of a merchant. His quickness and decision, the energetic conciseness of his manner, and his proud integrity, filled Anthony with admiration; he would have attached himself to him with enthusiastic devotion, had he seen more of him out of the business hours. Of an evening, when the merchant was not at some meeting or at his club, he lived only for his sister, to who he clung with touching tenderness.<sup>1</sup> For her he kept a carriage and horses, which he seldom used himself; to please her, he both went to, and gave evening parties, to which Anthony and his colleagues were never invited. Then carriages came to the house, livery-servants ran up and down stairs, bright shadows flitted past the illuminated windows, while poor Anthony in his garret sat looking on the brilliant bustle of the house to which he in a manner belonged, with a secret and eager longing, for our hero was scarcely nineteen, and knew the splendid society of the fashionable circles only from the deceitful descriptions he had read in books. Reason told him that he did not belong to the merchant's society, and if he and his colleagues were to make their appearance amongst those who were so much more highly cultivated, what would be the result. But what that good old gentleman, Reason, says, is not always listened to (with deference) by the young lady, called Desire; and Anthony often slunk back from the window to his lamp and books with a suppressed sigh, and tried hard to forget the enticing sounds of a quadrille, in listening to the imaginary roaring of lions and croaking of gigantic frogs in a tropical country.

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## CHAPTER VI.

BARON ROTHSATTEL had himself furnished his house in town. It was of moderate size, but the shape of the furniture, the simple arabesques painted on the walls, and the patterns of the curtains and carpets were selected with so much taste, that it was considered, in the best society, a model of elegance and comfort. He had prepared everything with the greatest secrecy. At last, the newly purchased carriage stopped at the door, the baron helped his lady out, and conducted her through a suite of rooms to her small boudoir, which was decorated with white muslin. The baroness was enchanted with the attention shown in all the arrangements, and he felt as proud and happy as a king. The family were soon settled comfortably; the farm-horses brought from the estate the luggage and stores of provisions, and after some days spent in unpacking and sweeping the stairs and carpets, they had time to look about them and think of paying the necessary visits in the town.

A great part of the nobility were in the habit of spending the winter months in the capital, and the Rothsattels found there several country neighbours, and many of their friends and relations. All were glad to welcome this distinguished family to the town, and after a few weeks, they found themselves at home in a large circle of gay society. The small nobles, with all the titles which had been so lavishly given them by the German sovereigns, formed a numerous and almost close corporation, and though there was no superfluity of intellectual cultivation among them, the comfort and sociability of

their mutual intercourse was, for that very reason, perhaps the greater ; the amiable character and dignified manners of the baroness, placed her at the head of the ladies' society, and the baron, who had at first missed very much his visits to the farm-yard and rides in the woods, soon found himself very happy amongst the friends of his youth. He became a member of one of the noblemen's clubs, resumed billiards, at which he was formerly a great player, played respectably at whist and ombre, and talked in his leisure hours on politics and on art. Thus, the family passed a comfortable and agreeable winter season, and the baron and his wife agreed that it was strange they should not before have indulged themselves in this pleasant and sensible change of life.

Leonora alone was not quite content with the new residence. She continued to justify her mother's apprehension that she would be an original. She found great difficulty in paying proper respect to the numerous old aunts of the family, and still greater in not accosting, when she met them in the streets, the gay gentlemen of the neighbourhood, friends of her father, whom she had been in the habit of seeing in the country. She was also bored with the case in which she was obliged to carry her class-books to the academy to which she went ; it was something between a bag and a portfolio, filled with writing and other lesson-books. As her mother did not approve of the footman carrying them for her, she hung the case on her arm and flung it about contemptuously as she walked along the streets ; from time to time she stopped, and with the boldness of a Juno, looked at the groups of market people, at vagabonds fighting, in short, at whatever collected a crowd of people. One day, when she was standing as usual in the street, with her satchel on her arm as a sign of her slavery, and a small parasol in her hand, she perceived the young man coming towards her whom she had conducted through the park and over the water. She rejoiced at this meeting, it was a pleasant remembrance of their country place, of her pony and swans. The young man was still at some distance when her sharp eyes caught sight of him. He approached without noticing her. As she was forbidden by her mother to address any gentleman in the street, she could only place herself in his way, and strike her parasol on the pavement in an authoritative way, in order to attract his attention. Anthony, who was on a business errand, raised his eyes, and to his great delight, saw the fair lady of the lake standing before him. He coloured and took off his hat, and much to her satisfaction, she saw, from his face beaming with pleasure, that in spite of her satchel, she made as powerful an impression on him as on the former occasion.

"How do you do, sir?" she inquired, throwing her head back with dignity.

"Very well," said Anthony : "how happy I am to see you in the town !"

"We are living here now for the winter," replied the girl, rather less stiffly, "at No. 20, Baren-strasse."

"May I ask how your pony is ?" said Anthony, respectfully.

"Only think, I was obliged to leave him at home," rejoined the lady, in a tone of lamentation : "and what are you doing here ?"

"I am in the office of T. O. Schroeter," answered Anthony, with a bow.

"A merchant, then," said the lady; "what business does the house carry on?"

"It deals in colonial goods and products; it is the largest Firm in that line," answered Anthony, with an air of importance.

"And have you found them good people, who take care of you?"

"My Principal is very kind to me," replied Anthony, "but in small things I must take care of myself."

"Have you any friends here with whom you can amuse yourself?" continued the young lady.

"I have some acquaintance, but I have much to do, and in my leisure hours I am occupied in learning for my own advantage."

"Indeed you are looking pale," said the girl, regarding him with motherly benevolence; "you ought to have more exercise, and take long walks. It has given me great pleasure to see you, and I shall always be glad to hear that you are well," she added, resuming her dignified air. She looked at him for another moment, then gave him a parting nod, and disappeared in the throng, while Anthony, hat in hand, looked after her.

Leonora did not think it necessary to waste many words upon this accidental meeting. Only, when some days after the baroness inquired of her husband from what warehouse they were to get the provisions for the household, Leonora looked up from her book, and said, "The largest warehouse in the place for colonial goods and products is that of T. O. Schroeter."

"How do you know?" asked her father, laughing; "you talk like an experienced merchant."

"That comes all from the day-school," answered Leonora, saucily.

The pleasures of society did not make the baron forget the main object of his sojourn in town. He made careful inquiries concerning the industrial undertakings of other landed proprietors, visited the manufactories of the town, and took pains to make the acquaintance of clever, practical men. He received a mass of information, and acquired some knowledge in machines and manufacturing undertakings. But the accounts he got were so contradictory, and the knowledge he obtained was so defective, that at last he determined it would be best not to hurry into anything, but to wait until he could meet with some undertaking which should promise the largest amount of profit with the greatest possible security.

We cannot conceal from our readers the interesting fact, that about this time the family treasures were increased by the arrival of a beautiful casket studded with gilt brass. It was of finely-veined wood, with arabesques of dead metal, and a very ingenious lock, which it was impossible to open, so that a thief must of necessity have carried off the whole box. In this repository were locked up forty-five thousand thalers, in the shape of new white bonds of the *Landschaft*. The baron used to regard them with especial tenderness. At first he sat for whole hours before the open box, and was never tired of arranging the parchment leaves according to their numbers, and making plans for the repayment of the capital; and when he had again committed the box to the care of the *Landschaft*, for the sake of safety, the thought of it was one of the little pleasures which the chivalrous baron enjoyed secretly. Indeed, the ghost of this casket



seemed to haunt the very household. The baroness was surprised to find her husband saving where he had never done so before; sometimes he advised her to abstain from having a box at the theatre, because they ought to live economically; or he told her with evident pleasure that he had won ten louis-d'or at cards the night before. She was too sensible not to become alarmed at these indications, and feared that her husband had unfortunately become involved in pecuniary embarrassments; but his assurances to the contrary, and the happy smile that at the same time played upon his countenance, soon quieted her. In fact, these fits of parsimony were not lasting, and proved to be nothing but innocent whims, for in all essential things the baron continued his usually handsome style of living, which was quite up to his rank and fortune.

Besides, it was not possible to save just then. The life in town, the furnishing of the house, and the unavoidable claims of society, did not, of course, diminish their expenditure.

And so it happened, that when the baron returned from his estate, where he had gone to examine into his accounts for the winter, he was in very bad sorts. He had made great calculations, and found that the last year's expenditure was larger than the income, and that the next year's revenue was not likely to cover the deficit; he was in want of two thousand thalers, which must be procured somehow. It went to his heart to take that sum out of the white parchments, and the man who would, with cold blood, have stood a shower of hostile bullets, felt a burning heat when he thought that by doing this he would be making a real debt of some thousand thalers on his property. He had sense enough to understand that he had made an error in his calculations. If you wish to acquire a fortune by regular small savings, you must, of course, limit your expenditure; but he had augmented it greatly. No doubt this increase had been necessary, but the combination of circumstances which occasioned it was an unfortunate accident. Since the days when he was a lieutenant, the good gentleman had not felt such a painful agitation. To leave the capital was impossible; a thousand reasons prevented that. He had taken his house on a lease of several years; what would all his friends say to a sudden departure; how could he ask such a sacrifice of his beloved wife and daughter? He must therefore keep his vexation to himself. In answer to the tender inquiries of the baroness, he spoke of a cold caught on the journey as an excuse for his depression; but for days the thought was continually gnawing at his heart, that he had suffered a great loss and made a retrograde step, and the more sanguine he was before, the more downcast he was now. Such was the effect upon him, that he was even induced, one day when walking in the streets, to enter a lottery-office and take a ticket, hoping that a kind destiny would bring him what was wanting. Sometimes, however, especially of an evening when he returned from some gay party, he laughed at his own anxiety, and blamed himself for it as a folly; the whole misfortune was so trifling, there was nothing essentially wrong, in a few years his affairs would be in good order again; but, when morning came, troublesome thoughts would again intrude, and he could not get rid of them,

It was on such a morning that Herr Ehrental's name was announced, who came to pay him for some corn he had bought. A feeling

of uneasiness came over the baron at the sound of the name, for this man had advised him to take the bonds; the next moment, indeed, he remembered that that man had not advised him to go and live in town; yet he was angry with him, and his reception was colder than usual. Herr Ehrental was too experienced a man of business to pay much attention to the moods of his employers. He put down his money, and was profuse in his assurances of devotion. The baron remained inaccessible until Ehrental, when about to leave, asked, "Are the bonds come, my good lord?"

"Yes," replied the baron, sulkily.

"It is a great pity," exclaimed Ehrental, "that forty-five thousand thalers should lie as useless as if they did not exist. To you it is a matter of indifference whether you gain a couple of thousand thalers or not, but to one of us it is not so. At this very time I could do a stroke of business that would be both profitable and safe; but my money is tied up, and I must be content to lose a ready-money profit of four thousand thalers."

The baron listened attentively; the broker went on with greater courage: "My lord baron, you have known me for years to be an honest man; you know, also, that I am not a poor one. I will make you a proposition. Lend me ten thousand thalers, in bonds for three months; I will give you in exchange a promissory note, which is as good as ready money. Four thousand thalers will be gained by the transaction, and I shall share it with you, my lord baron, in equal shares, instead of paying you interest. You will not run any risk, though we do the business together; for if there is any loss, I will bear it alone, and pay you, my honoured lord, the ten thousand thalers at the end of three months."

These words of the dealer, little exciting as they may probably appear to the reader, sounded to the baron like an alarm signal at an uncomfortable bivouac. Violent emotions and wild delight were working within him. He was hardly calm enough to say, "I must first know what kind of business it is you wish to enter into with my money."

The money-dealer stated that a proposal had been made to him to purchase a large quantity of timber, which lay in a timber-yard in the upper part of the province. He took out of his pocket a calculation of the quantity of wood, the expense of carriage to the capital, and the price it would fetch there; and he proved to the baron that within six or eight weeks he would make by it a sure profit of some importance.

The baron perused attentively the document. If the calculation was correct, the profit was clear as day; but he could not help asking the prudent question, "How is it that the proprietor of the timber does not transact the business on his own account, and allows so sure a profit to escape him?"

The dealer shrugged his shoulders. "People who enter into these kind of transactions must not always ask why the other lets his goods go so cheap. Those who are in difficulties cannot always wait two or three months; the river is covered with ice, and the man wants money within two days from this."

"Are you sure that the right to sell is unquestionable?" inquired the baron.

"The man is solvent," said the dealer; "if I get him the money by to-morrow evening, the wood is mine."

The nobleman felt uneasy at the idea of taking advantage of another's distress, much as his heart was longing for the gains to be derived from it. He answered, with dignity, "I consider it ungentlemanlike to profit by the losses of another."

"Why should he lose?" asked Ehrenthal, eagerly. "He is a speculator who wants money just now—perhaps wishes to transact some business on a larger scale, and so must forego a smaller advantage for a greater one. He has offered to deliver the whole stock of wood for ten thousand, ready money. It is not my business to ask whether he can make more with my money than I can with his wood."

What Ehrenthal said was right; only he concealed one thing. The seller of the wood was an unfortunate speculator, who, pressed by his creditors, was afraid of an execution, and wished to put an end to their exorbitant expectations by selling secretly his stores to strangers, and disappearing with the money. Perhaps Herr Ehrenthal knew this; perhaps, also, the baron guessed that there was something wrong about so easy a gain; for it was evident from the way he shook his head that the thing was not quite clear to him. And yet there was little to risk and nothing to answer for. He lent his money to a safe man, whom he had known for years as wealthy and punctual in his business, and he would have the prospect of soon getting rid of a demon that tormented him incessantly. He was too much excited to consider that he might be casting out one demon, through Beelzebub, the prince of them. He rang for his carriage, and said, politely, "In an hour you shall have the money."

Ehrenthal thanked him in his warmest way for his great kindness, wrote on the spot a carefully worded promissory note, and took his leave with a submissiveness that contrasted singularly with the proud nod of the baron.

From that day the baron lived in anxious expectation. He was always thinking of his conversation with the dealer. When sitting by his wife at the tea-table, and talking over theatres and concerts, his mind was wandering restless among piles of wood, or weighed down by long floating masts; and when examining his daughter's writing books, the covers and margins seemed to reflect Ehrenthal's face staring and sneering at him. When he rode his hunter, the horse directed his head towards the river, and the rider gazed with gloomy eyes, on the frozen stream, or saw the ice-flakes floating down, and the high spring-tide dashing against the stones of the quay.

Ehrenthal had not shown his face for a long while. At last, one fine sunny morning, he appeared with his usual bows, drew a large parcel out of his pocket, and exclaimed triumphantly, "My lord, the business is done; here are your bonds back again, and here are the two thousand thalers—your share in the profit."

The baron's hand eagerly seized the parcel: there were the same white parchments he had taken from his chest with such a heavy heart, and, besides, a bundle of bank-notes. This time, the baron scarcely heard the bombast of the dealer; a burden was removed from his heart—he had his bonds back, and the deficit in his finances was covered. Ehrenthal was graciously dismissed, and the baron had no need to make an effort in order to be an agreeable companion.

That very day he bought a set of turquoises for the baroness, which she had long been secretly wishing for.

After that day there was bright sunshine in the baron's house, and, if there was any remembrance of the past, it showed itself only in trifles.

But a dark shadow, arising from the late proceedings, was still to fall upon the baron. He was reading the newspaper in his wife's room, when his eye fell upon a warrant of caption, by which a timber-merchant, who had disappeared, was pursued on account of a fraudulent bankruptcy. He laid the paper down; a cold perspiration covered his forehead; and he, the fearless cavalier, removed the sheet from where it had been lying, and hid it under the books on his writing-table. Supposing the defrauder should be the same person! Ehrenthal had not named him. Was it possible that he, the nobleman, through his money and his gains, had done injury to the well-founded claims of others, that he had assisted in a fraud, and had been paid for that assistance? These were fearful thoughts for his proud heart. He paced to and fro about the room, and wrung his hands. He hastened to his desk, to pack up the money he had gained, and send it away—he knew not where—but away from his house, and from his soul. With consternation, he perceived that only a small portion of it was left. Like one paralyzed, he sat down by the table, and leant his head upon his hands. He felt as if something had been broken asunder within him, and, he feared, for ever. He sprang up vehemently, pulled the bell, and sent for Ehrenthal.

The dealer happened accidentally to be on a journey. Meanwhile, those friendly voices which speak within men's hearts—cleverly putting everything in the best light to them—now spoke to the baron. How foolish his alarm was! There were hundreds living up the river who dealt in timber; it was most improbable that Ehrenthal's man should just happen to be the fraudulent one. And even if it was, how was he to blame? Little, very little—nothing to be thought of by a man of business. Even Ehrenthal, was it his fault if the seller had used the money for a fraud? Everything had been bought honestly and legally. In this way did internal voices calm the baron's fears; and how gladly did he listen to them!

When Ehrenthal at last arrived, the baron met him with an expression of countenance that quite frightened him, and, before he could enter the room, exclaimed vehemently, "What is the name of the man from whom you bought the timber?"

Ehrenthal stood confounded. He also had read the paper, and understood what was passing in the baron's mind. He mentioned the first name that came into his head.

"And what was the place where the timber was kept?" This second query was put in a more composed tone. Herr Ehrenthal again mentioned some indifferent place.

"Are you telling me the truth?" asked the baron, drawing a deep breath.

Herr Ehrenthal saw that he had to deal with a sick man, and treated him with the gentleness of a physician. "Why do you trouble your mind with needless anxieties?" he said, shaking his head. "I believe that the man with whom I dealt has made a good profit by it. Great deliveries of oak have been ordered, so that any one who lives

up the river may gain a hundred per cent. I believe he will have done so. The transaction I had with him was a good and safe one, such as no merchant would let slip out of his hands. And if he was a rogue, why need that trouble you, my good lord? I had no reason to conceal his name from you, nor that of the place; but I did not mention them, because it was not you who did the business, but I. I was your debtor, and I paid you back the money with commission—a good one, it is true; but as I had gained by you for many years, why should I not give you an advantage which I might have given to any other? Why do you trouble yourself, my lord baron, about things that do not exist?”

“You do not understand me, Ehrenthal,” said the baron, more kindly. “I am glad that the thing is so. If the defaulter had been the man with whom you had dealt, I should have broken off our connection. I would never have forgiven you making me, against my will, an accomplice in a fraud.”

Ehrenthal was dismissed, and the baron was delivered from a load of care. He fully intended to inquire about the unknown name and village; but he did not do so. The anguish he had gone through had made the remembrance of the transaction very painful to him, and he tried to dismiss it from his thoughts.

He was a good man, with sensitive feelings, and Ehrenthal was of that opinion as he descended the stairs, grumbling out, “He is good; the baron is good!”

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## CHAPTER VII.

ANTHONY was placed under the combined superintendence of Herren Jordan and Pix, and found himself in the position of the small vassal of a great state. Those who were known to the world under the general name of clerks, in his eyes, held very different positions. Near a window of the inner office sat Herr Liebold, the book-keeper, mysteriously busy, who reigned as prime minister of the house, in solitary majesty. He was incessantly writing figures in a huge book, and only occasionally looked up from his cipher, when a sparrow perched on the bars of his window, or a sunbeam cast a bright yellow glow over the corner of it. He knew that the sunbeam, according to the ancient laws of nature, dared not at any season intrude below the top of the window-sill; yet he could not help expecting from it a sudden inroad upon his ledger, and observed it with suspicious glances.

The tranquillity of his corner, contrasted with the continual bustle of the opposite one; there ruled the second dignitary, Herr Purzel, the cashier, in a separate partition, surrounded by strong iron boxes, heavy money-chests, and a large table with a stone top. On this table thalers were jingling, golden ducats chinking, and bank-notes fluttering, from morning till night. Whoever might wish to paint an allegorical figure of punctuality should, without doubt, have taken the portrait of Herr Purzel, and would denote the ancient costume by placing his stockings with artistic licence over his boots, and his white shirt over the office-coat. Everything had its fixed place in Herr Purzel's mind—God, the Firm, the large, strong money-chest, the wax taper, and the seal. Every morning, when the cashier entered the

closet, he began his official activity, seizing the chalk, and making a white point on the table, to fix the place where it had to pass that day. He was not alone in his important charge; an old servant was his orderly, who trotted all day long through the town, carrying money-bags and bank-notes. It must be confessed, this man used to look rather rubicund of an evening, and had somewhat of a propensity for strong drinks. But this did not impair his fidelity or presence of mind; it rather sharpened his wits. No man had so many secret pockets, and after each glass he put the bank-notes in a more secret place.

In the front room was Herr Jordan, the governor-general of this imperial Firm. He was the chief of the correspondents, the head clerk of the house, had a per centage, and was sometimes asked for his opinion by the Principal. He continued to be to Anthony what he had been the first days of his stay, a true mentor, a pattern of activity and good sense personified.

Amongst the corresponding clerks under the superintendence of Herr Jordan, the person most interesting to Anthony, next to the sanguine Herr Specht, was Herr Bauman, the future apostle to the heathen. The missionary was not only a saint, but also a good accountant. He was infallible in all calculations of measure and weight, fixed the price of goods, and took charge of the accounts of the house. Herr Bauman lived in a room contiguous to Anthony's, and was so much attracted by our hero's sweet disposition, that in a short time he took quite a fancy to him, and occasionally favoured him with an evening visit. He kept at a distance from the others, and bore with Christian patience their jokes about his plans.

There were other dignitaries belonging to the house, out of doors, Herr Birnbaum, the custom-house clerk, who appeared rarely in the office, and only on Sunday at the table of the Principal; he was a steady man, and was at the head of the Custom-house department. If any of these gentlemen deserved to be called officials, it was him, and he wore his coat continually buttoned up like his friends the public custom-house officers. There was, besides, the storekeeper, who was charged with the control of the different magazines in the town, effected insurances, and made the large purchases of provincial products at the town market. Herr Balbus was not a refined man; he was born of a poor family, and was deficient in education, but held in great esteem by the Principal. Anthony heard that he maintained his mother and a sick sister by his work.

But the greatest activity of all, the real, warlike, pugnacious activity of an absolute military chief, was developed in Herr Pix, first manager of the provincial business. His empire began at the door of the front office, extended through the whole house, and even outside it. He was the divinity of all the retail dealers from the country who had their running accounts with the house; in their eyes he was the master of the house, and in exchange he did them the honour of inquiring after their wives and children. He had charge of the whole business of conveyances, governed half-a-dozen menial servants, and as many packers, scolded the carriers, knew everything, was always ready for everything, and could, at the same moment, wish joy to a retail dealer's wife on the accouchment of her daughter, reprimand a beggar, give orders to a servant, and observe the balance

of the great scale. Like all grand seigneurs, he could not bear to be contradicted, and defended his views, even against the Principal with an obstinacy that excited the astonishment of our Anthony. Besides this, Herr Pix possessed two qualities, of real importance in a commercial man; he could say of any handful of coffee, in what country it had been grown; and he could not bear to see an empty space in the house or its neighbourhood, like the air, and natural philosophy, which abhor a vacuum. Wherever Herr Pix could spy out a corner, closet, or air-hole of a cellar, he filled it with barrels, ladders, ropes, and all imaginable articles, and whenever he and his band of giants had once settled, no power on earth could dislodge them, not even the Principal himself.

"Where is Wohlfart?" asked Herr Schroeter, from the door of the front office.

"In the garrets," coolly answered Herr Pix.

"What is he doing there?" inquired the Principal, surprised.

At the same moment loud voices were heard from upstairs, and Anthony rushed down, followed by a servant, both laden with cigar-boxes, behind them the aunt, who was in considerable agitation and very angry.

"They will not have us upstairs," said Anthony, indignantly, to Herr Pix.

"They are beginning now to invade our drying-loft," said the aunt, indignantly.

"The cigars must not remain below," declared Herr Pix to the Principal and the aunt.

"I will tolerate no cigars amongst our washing," exclaimed the aunt; "no spot in the house is safe from Herr Pix. In the house-maids' rooms, also, he has piled up cigar-boxes; the maids complain that they cannot bear the smell any longer."

"It is dry upstairs," said Herr Pix to the Principal.

"Could you not deposit the cigars anywhere else?" inquired the Principal, considerably.

"Impossible!" replied Herr Pix, decidedly.

"Do you want the whole loft for your washing, dear aunt?" asked the Principal.

"I dare say half would be enough," interposed Herr Pix.

"I hope you will be content with a corner," decided the Principal, smiling. "Let a partition be made directly by the carpenter."

"If Herr Pix once gets into the loft he will dislodge our washing entirely," complained the experienced aunt.

"It shall be the last concession we will make to him," said the Principal, soothingly.

Herr Pix smiled silently; but, as the aunt asserted, with a rebellious grin, and as soon as the authorities had turned their backs, he ordered our hero to return upstairs with the boxes.

Herr Pix, however, was in his greatest glory when his confidants, the travelling clerks of the house, returned home for a short time. Then the provincial branch assembled and discussed the news from the country. Herr Pix unfolded his knowledge of all the tradespeople of the province, of their dispositions, and the exact amount of their fortunes, and declaimed much on the confidence and credit the small retail dealers deserved. Then they emptied a bowl of punch

and played at solo, a game which was preferred by Herr Pix, on account of its monarchical character.

But what gave Herr Pix the greatest consideration in the eyes of the world were the giants, who, under his orders, busied themselves round the great scales, tall broad-shouldered fellows of herculean strength. When they closed and rolled the huge barrels, and carried hundred weights as common people do pounds, they appeared to the new under clerk like the remnant of an ancient race which, according to fairy tales, once inhabited the German soil, and played at marbles with the towering rocks. Anthony soon observed that they were not all of the same race. There were first, six menial servants, all of tough material and more than full size; they were the regular subjects of the black brush; some of them lived in the house and watched by turns during the night. From nine o'clock a gigantic figure might be seen sitting silent in the shade of an immense barrel, with Pluto, the Newfoundland of Fraulein Schroeter by his side. Tall, however, and powerful as these servants were, in many things they resembled the sons of mortal men; but the packers to the guild of merchants, who formed a separate corporation that had their head-quarters at the custom-house outside the town, and carried burdens from thence to the great warehouses within it, or brought them away, were the most powerful amongst the giants, and some of them possessed such bodily strength as could not be found among men of any other vocation. They had to do work for various commercial houses, but the ancient respectable house of T. O. Schroeter was that which they preferred to any other in the world when they condescended to deal with the dwarfs of the present day. For more than one generation the head of that firm had been the head of their corporation, and thus a sort of client connection was established between them. On New-year's day Herr Schroeter received their congratulations, he was godfather to all the giants' children, which were brought in the course of the year in the arms of the nurse to the baptismal font, and alarmed the parson so much by their big heads, that he thought it necessary to raise his voice to the pitch of thunder, in order to cast out the devil from them.

Among these leather aprons Sturm was the chief, and also the tallest and strongest, a man who avoided narrow streets that he might not rub his clothes against the walls on both sides. He was always summoned when a load was too heavy for his companions; he then placed his shoulder against it and pushed the biggest barrels away like mere logs of wood. He was said to have once raised a Polish horse up by its four legs, and Herr Specht declared nothing on earth was too heavy for him. Above his huge body his broad face beamed with a good humour which was only tempered by the dignity befitting a man in his position.

He was on a footing of especial friendship with the Firm, and had an only son to whom he clung with the greatest tenderness. The boy had lost his mother early, and his father had placed him in a very peculiar position, which he had himself contrived for him in the house of T. O. Schroeter when he was a lad of fifteen. Karl Sturm was among the servants, what Fink was in the office, a volunteer; he wore a leather apron and a small hook like his father, and had acquired by his own merits an extended sphere of activity. He enjoyed the



confidence of every member of the firm, knew every corner of the building, collected together all the bits of cord and string, the nails and the staves, preserved all the packing-paper, fed Pluto, and assisted the footman in cleaning the boots. He could tell precisely where any barrel, board, or old remnant of goods was to be found. When a nail was to be driven in Karl was called; when a chisel was mislaid, Karl knew where to find it; when the aunt prepared her stores of hams and sausages for the winter, Karl understood best how to pack up those treasures; and if Herr Schroeter had to send an urgent message, Karl was the surest messenger. Apt for everything, always in good humour, and never embarrassed for an answer, he was a general favourite. The packers called him our Karl, and his father often turned from his work to cast a secret glance of proud satisfaction on his boy.

There was only one point on which he was not quite content with him; Karl did not promise to equal him in stature or strength. He was a fine lad, with rosy cheeks and fair curly hair, but it was unanimously decided by the giants, that he never could be expected to attain more than a middle size. His father, in consequence, treated him as a kind of dwarf, with incessant anxious care, and not without a feeling of melancholy. He forbade him to assist at the packing of heavy goods, and sometimes with paternal tenderness, laid his hand upon his head as gently as if he were afraid that the skull of a dwarf like him could not be thicker than an egg-shell, and must break with any strong pressure.

"It is quite indifferent what the creature learns," he said to Herr Pix, when he introduced the boy into the business after his confirmation, "provided he learns two things; to be honest, and practical." This speech accorded entirely with Herr Pix's views, and the father began his instruction at once by taking his son into the large ware-room amongst the open boxes, and saying to him, "Here are almonds, and there raisins—those in the little barrel are the sweetest; taste them."

"They taste good, father," exclaimed Karl, with much satisfaction.

"I should think so, Lilliputian," the father said, with a nod. "Look, thou mayst eat out of all these barrels as much as thou likest, nobody will prevent thee; Herr Schroeter allows it, Herr Pix allows it, and so do I. But now listen, my little man. The longer thou canst stand before these barrels without touching them, the better for thee, and when thou canst not stand it any longer, come out and tell me. This is no command, it is only for thine own, and honour's sake." So saying, the old man, after having taken his big watch, with three cases to it, out of his pocket and laid it on a chest near him, left the boy alone. "Try it first for one hour," he said, as he was going away, "if it won't do, there is no harm; it will soon be learnt."

The boy put his hands defiantly into his pockets, and paced to and fro amongst the barrels. After more than two hours had passed, he came back to his father, with the watch in his hand, and exclaimed, "It is enough."

"Two hours and a half," said old Sturm, nodding contentedly to Herr Pix. "It is good, my little man; now thou needst not enter the

store-room again to-day. Come along, thou mayest fasten this box together; here is a new hammer for thee, it cost ten groschen."

"It is worth only eight," said Karl, examining the hammer, "thou givest always too high a price."

Thus was Karl introduced. The morning after Anthony's arrival, he said to his father in the entrance hall, "There is a new under clerk come."

"What kind of person?" asked the father.

"He wears a green coat and grey trousers of middling cloth, and is not much taller than me. He has already talked to me, and seems to be a good fellow. Give me thy knife, I must make a new peg for his cupboard."

"My knife, thou shrimp!" exclaimed Sturm, looking at his son reprovingly; "thou hast thy own."

"It is broken," said Karl, indignantly.

"Who bought it?" asked Sturm.

"Thou boughtest it, father Goliath; it was a miserable thing, only fit for a baby."

"I could not buy a heavy one for thy little hand," said the father, mortified.

"There it is again," said Karl, placing himself opposite his father; "from thy way of talking, any one would take me for an imp in leading-strings, who buttons his trousers to his jacket, and carries a white tail behind."

The packers laughed. "Don't rebel against thy father," answered Sturm, laying his hand carefully on his son's head.

"Look, father, there is the new under-clerk," cried Karl, observing him with searching looks as a new possession of the house.

Anthony being introduced by Herr Pix to the giant, said, looking up to him with great respect, "I have never before been in business, so I beg you will help me when I am in need of instruction."

"Everything must be learnt by degrees," answered the giant, with dignity. "Here is my little one, who has learnt a good deal in a year. So your father is not a merchant?"

"My father was a public officer; he is dead," replied Anthony.

"Oh, I am very sorry," said the packer, with an expression of sadness on his face, "but your mother still lives to rejoice in you."

"She also is dead," rejoined Anthony.

"Oh dear, dear!" cried out the giant, in a tone of pity, reflecting with astonishment on the sad destiny of Anthony. He shook his head sorrowfully, and at last said softly to Karl, "He has no mother."

"And no father," replied Karl in the same tone.

"Deal kindly with him, Liliputian," said the old man; "thou art a kind of orphan too."

"To be sure," cried Karl, tapping the packer's apron; "he who has so tall a father has trouble enough."

"Dost thou know what thou art? a graceless little rogue," said the father, merrily striking his mallet on the hoops of one of the barrels.

From that time Karl bestowed his favour on the new-comer. After having in the morning written No. 14 on the soles of his boots, he put them with especial care on one side; when the buttons were torn off his clothes, he sewed them on; and whenever Anthony had to work

at the scales, he stood by ready to help, handed him what he wanted, and put the small weights into the scale. Anthony returned these services by the kindness of his manner towards father and son; he liked to talk to the clever lad, and became the confidant of many of his little fancies. When Christmas approached, he made a collection among the gentlemen of the office, which enabled him to purchase for him a large box of useful tools, and thus rendered Karl the happiest being upon earth.

Anthony was also on the best footing with all his superiors in the Firm. He listened with great respect to the wise decisions of Herr Jordan, he served Herr Pix with honest and active zeal, allowed Herr Specht to instruct him in politics, read all the missionary reports confided to him by Herr Bauman, never asked Herr Purzel for any advance, but contrived to do with the small sum which his guardian was able to send him; and by his ready acquiescence in the undoubted truths advanced by Herr Liebold, he encouraged him to leave them without recantation. With all he went on well, except one, and that was the volunteer.

One afternoon, when the office was looking very dull and uncomfortable, in the dusk of the shortening days, when everybody entering brought a cloud of damp, foggy air into the room, which did not improve it, and the melancholy ticking of the old time-piece rendered it still less cheerful, Herr Jordan happened to give our hero a commission to execute some urgent business in another mercantile house. As Anthony approached his desk to receive the letter, Fink looked up from his writing, and said to Jordan, "Send him at the same time to the gunmaker's; the rascal shall send me my gun by him."

The blood rushed into Anthony's face, and he said angrily to Herr Jordan, "Do not give me the commission, for I will not do it."

"So, so, my young bantam; and why not?" asked Fink, looking up surprised.

"I am not your servant," answered Anthony, exasperated. "If you had asked me to do the errand for you, I would perhaps have done it, but I will not execute a commission given with such arrogance."

"Silly boy!" grumbled Fink, and went on writing.

The insolent words were heard throughout the whole office, all the pens stopped, and all the clerks looked at Anthony. He was in a state of the greatest excitement, and exclaimed with trembling voice but flashing eyes, "You have insulted me, and I will not bear an insult from any one, least of all from you; you shall give me an explanation to-night."

"I do not wish to thrash anybody," said Fink peacefully; "I am no schoolmaster, and do not carry a rod."

"Enough!" cried Anthony, deadly pale. "You shall account to me for that." He seized his hat, and rushed out of the room with Herr Jordan's letter.

A cold rain was falling, but Anthony perceived it not; he felt crushed, insulted, sneered at, by one more powerful than himself—a deadly wound to his innocent boyish pride. His whole life appeared to him annihilated; he felt himself helpless on the path of life, alone, and a stranger in the world. Towards Fink his feeling was one of burning hatred mixed with admiration—the insolent fellow, even after

this insult, seemed to him so superior. His heart was heavy, and his eyes filled with tears. In this state he arrived at the house where he was to deliver his commission. The Principal's carriage was standing at the door. He slipped by with downcast eyes, and could hardly recover composure enough to conceal his unhappiness from the strangers within. When he came out again, he found the sister of the Principal in the hall, on the point of getting into the carriage; he made a salutation, and tried to pass quickly by her. Sabine stopped, and looked at him. The footman was not there; the coachman was talking loud from his box to an acquaintance on the other side of the carriage. Upon seeing this, Anthony came up, called to the coachman, opened the door, and helped the young lady into the carriage. Sabine held the door back which he was going to shut, and looked inquiringly at his disturbed countenance. "What is the matter with you, Herr Wohlfart?" she asked gently.

"It will pass," answered Anthony, with quivering lips; and bowing to her, he shut the door. Sabine regarded him for a moment silently; she bowed to him, and the carriage drove off.

Insignificant as the incident was, it gave another direction to Anthony's thoughts. Sabine's inquiry and greeting at that moment dispelled his faint-heartedness. In her courteous bow he read esteem, and sympathy in her words. The kind question, the greeting, and the little civility he had been able to show her, the young mistress of the house, reminded him that he was no longer a child, helpless, weak, and alone. Even in his humble position he enjoyed the esteem of others; he had a claim to it, and it was his duty to preserve it. He raised his head, and his resolution was taken, rather to go to extremities than bear an insult; he lifted up his hand as if he were taking an oath.

When he returned to the office he gave an account of his commission with a composed manner, and went silently to his place, and worked on, unconcerned by the curious looks of the others.

After the closing of the office he hastened to Herr Jordan's room. He found Pix and Specht already there. The three gentlemen regarded him with doubtful looks, somewhat puzzled, rather pitiful, and a little contemptuous, as at a poor devil whom fate has prostrated. With a self-possession which, considering his little experience in affairs of honour, was certainly remarkable, Anthony said, "I have been insulted by Herr von Fink, and am determined not to put up with this insult. Both of you, Herr Jordan and Herr Pix, are my superiors in office, and I have great respect for your experience. I wish much to know whether you think me in the right in the quarrel."

Herr Jordan prudently kept silent, but Herr Pix resolutely lighted his cigar, seated himself on the wood-basket near the stove, and declared, "You are a good fellow, Wohlfart, and Fink is in the wrong; that is my opinion."

"And mine also," assented Herr Specht.

"It is well that you have applied to us," said Herr Jordan; "I hope the difference may be settled; Fink is often rough and short, but he is not malicious."

"I do not see how the affront can be compensated, if I do not take the necessary steps," said Anthony, gravely.

"You will not lay the quarrel before the Principal?" asked Herr

Jordan, with displeasure; "it would be very unpleasant to all the gentlemen."

"Most of all to me," replied Anthony; "I know what I have to do, and only wish you first to say, that Fink has treated me ill."

"He is a volunteer," said Herr Jordan, "and has no right to give you commissions, at least on his own private business, about hares and partridges."

"That is sufficient," Anthony said; "and now I beg of you, Herr Jordan, to allow me a few moments' conversation with yourself alone." He said this with so much earnestness, that Herr Jordan, without any reply, took him into his bed-room. Anthony then seized his hand, pressed it warmly, and said, "I must ask you to do me a great service; will you go down to Herr von Fink, and demand of him to beg my pardon to-morrow, in the presence of all the gentlemen of the office, for the insolent words he has used towards me?"

"He will hardly do that," said Herr Jordan, shaking his head.

"If he does not," said Anthony, vehemently, "challenge him in my name—either swords or pistols."

If a black smoke had suddenly risen from the inkstand before the eyes of Herr Jordan, and rolled itself into the form of a fearful ghost, as in some tale of old, and if this ghost had declared his intention of strangling him on the spot, this gentleman could not have looked more amazed than he did now standing before our hero. "You are mad, Wohlfart!" he exclaimed at last; "you have a duel with Fink! Why, he is a desperate shot, and you are a novice, and have only been in the house six months. It is impossible."

"I have been at college, and have passed through all the forms, and through my examination, and should now be a student if I had not preferred being a merchant. A curse upon the business, if it degrades me so much that I cannot challenge my enemy! If that is the case, I shall go this very day to Herr Schroeter, and tell him that I leave!" cried out Anthony, with flaming eyes.

Herr Jordan looked with the greatest astonishment at his good-natured scholar, who seemed turned all at once into a fantastical giant. "Don't be so vehement, dear Wohlfart!" he said, in a soothing tone; "I will go down to Fink, perhaps all can be arranged."

"I demand an apology before the whole office," replied Anthony; "an apology or satisfaction."

We may as well now observe what the gentlemen in the next room were doing in the meantime. Pix had, like a clever general, moved the basket with one push near to the door of the bedroom, and was sitting there apparently quite indifferent, only occupied with his cigar, while Herr Specht could not resist approaching his car to the door. "They are to fight!" whispered Specht, enchanted with the idea of the fine feelings this quarrel promised to draw forth. "Take my word for it, Pix, there will be a frightful catastrophe; we must all go to the funeral; not one ought to stay away. I will get permission for us bachelors to carry the coffin."

"Whose coffin?" inquired Pix, surprised.

"Wohlfart will have to pay for it," resumed Herr Specht, in the same hollow whisper.

"Nonsense," said Pix, "you are a fool."

"I am no fool, and I beg you will not apply to me any offensive

language," exclaimed Herr Specht, still whispering, and resolved after Anthony's example, not to submit to degradation.

"Don't shriek into my ears so," said Herr Pix, unmoved; "I cannot understand a word you say."

At that moment the door opened, Specht sprung across to a distant window, and was looking out with great interest on a dark rainy night, while Pix shook hands with Anthony, and declared that he was a brave fellow, and that the provincial branch would be entirely on his side. Herr Jordan went downstairs, but soon returned; Herr von Fink was not at home. In all probability the jockey was sitting in some tavern, without any foreboding of what was going on. Anthony then said, "I will not let the matter rest till to-morrow; I shall write to him, and have the letter placed on his table by a servant."

"Pray do no such thing," entreated Herr Jordan; "you are too angry now."

"I am very calm," answered Anthony, though his cheeks were burning, "I shall write only what is necessary. I must request of you, gentlemen, to keep secret from others what you have heard here."

This they promised. Anthony then went up to his room, and wrote a note, in which he explained to Herr von Fink why he was in the wrong; and in conclusion, left him the choice of satisfying Anthony's injured honour by swords or pistols. The note was sufficiently well written for so young a gentleman, and was deposited in Fink's room near his candle, after Herr Specht had enjoined the servant, whom he stopped for that purpose on the stairs, to draw three large notes of admiration in chalk on the table; these were probably intended to represent the notches which the messenger of the holy *fehme*\* used to cut with an axe out of the gate of the castle of the accused person. Anthony remained the rest of the evening in his room, walking to and fro in great agitation: now the scene of the injury was present to his mind, then his imagination painted dramatically that which was to ensue, and all those feelings worked within him which are inevitable to a poor lad before his first duel.

In the meantime there was a general meeting of the clerks in Herr Jordan's room. Pix and Specht having promised not to speak, confined themselves to allusions so dark and mysterious, that most of the other gentlemen thought that a murder had been already committed, or was to be feared at any moment; at last Herr Jordan spoke as follows:—"Since the quarrel is no secret, and we are all of us concerned in the matter, it will be advisable for us to discuss it together, and unite in exerting ourselves to prevent any bad consequences. I shall sit up till Fink comes home, and speak to him about it immediately. Meanwhile I must do Wohlfart the justice to state, that, for a young man without experience, he has behaved as well as possible." All agreed. Then Herr Birnbaum, clerk of the customs, and Herr Specht entered into a lively discussion on the different kinds of duels, and the latter asserted that in a duel across the handkerchief, the duellists were blindfolded with a silk handkerchief, and were then turned round on their places, until the judge of the combat gave the signal by knocking his stick on the ground, when they were free to shoot in which direction they pleased. Herr Bauman slept

\* Secret court of justice in the middle ages.

away first from the society, and went to Anthony, pressed him heartily by the hand, and fervently implored him, not on account of a few rough words to risk the lives of two men. After he had taken leave, Anthony found on the table a small copy of the New Testament; it was open, and a large dog's-ear pointed to the holy sentence, "Bless them that curse you." He was not exactly in a mood to act up to the spirit of these words, but he sat down before the book and read the passage which he had so often, as a child, repeated to his excellent mother. He became softer and quieter, and in that disposition went to bed.

Meanwhile the rumour of a terrible occurrence had penetrated through all the key-holes, crevices, and chambers of the old buildings.

Sabine was in her store-room. This was a room which would have been somewhat incommodious for a visitor, but most comfortable and satisfactory to a good housewife. Against the walls stood immense cupboards of oak and walnut, with beautiful inlaid work, in the middle a large table with carved legs, and round it some ancient arm-chairs. In the open cupboards you saw, by the light of a lamp, innumerable damask table-cloths, high tiers of linen and coloured stuffs, crystal goblets, silver cups, china and delf, in the taste of more than three generations. The air was filled with the scent of old lavender, eau de Cologne, and linen fresh from the wash. Here Sabine reigned alone. She did not much like to see any one else enter the room; she took out whatever was wanted from the cupboards, and put it back again with her own hands; only the most trusty servant had the privilege of helping her on busy days, and sometimes Karl Sturm, her aide-de-camp, who prepared certain pink pasteboard tickets to mark the linen, and wrote beautiful figures upon them.

On this day, Sabine, at a late hour, was still standing before the table, loaded with white linen; she was collecting the finest damask together, counting and sorting tablecloths and napkins, tying up large parcels with pink tape, and putting the tickets with numbers on them. Occasionally she held up a piece to the lamp, and examined with pleasure the white arabesques which the weaver had skilfully worked in them. Then a dark shadow passed over her countenance as she sorrowfully observed that some wonderfully fine napkins had in many places holes pierced through them, three or four in a row. At last she called the servant. "It is not to be borne any longer, Franz; in No. 24, also, there are two or three napkins pierced by a fork: one of the gentlemen makes holes in the table-linen. There is no need for that in our house."

"Certainly not," said the confidant, with a sigh. "I have charge of the plate, and know best that it is not necessary."

"Which of the gentlemen is so inconsiderate?" inquired Sabine, angrily. "It must be one of the new ones."

"It is Herr von Fink," answered the servant; "he sticks his fork into his napkin regularly every day; it gives me a stitch in my heart every time he does it. But I, of course, can say nothing."

Sabine bent over the injured napkins. "I knew it was him," she said, with a sigh. "But it cannot go on. I will give a separate set for Herr von Fink, which we must sacrifice till an opportunity occurs of asking him to desist from his attacks. She went to the cupboard and searched for a long time. It was hard to choose. Of the coarse

ones she could give up dozens without pain ; but the fine sets were all dear to her. "These may go," she said at last, sadly, "one of them is missing. She looked once more at the pattern, small peacocks among garlands of flowers, and laid them on the servant's arm. "Herr von Fink shall have no other napkins than these."

Franz still lingered, and said, with a tone of vexation, "He has also burnt one of the curtains of his bedroom ; it will be entirely useless."

"And they were quite new," said Sabine, sorrowfully. "To-morrow morning take them away. What is the matter now, Franz ? Has anything happened ?"

"Alas ! lady," the servant answered mysteriously, "there is something going wrong amongst the gentlemen there. Herr von Fink has insulted Herr Wohlfart, who is furious. It will come to a duel. Herr Specht says the gentlemen fear there will be a great catastrophe."

"A duel," exclaimed Sabine, "between Fink and Wohlfart !" She shook her head. "You must have misunderstood Herr Specht," she added, with a smile.

"No, Fraulein Sabine ; this time it is in good earnest. There will be mischief, for Herr Wohlfart passed me in great anger, and did not touch his tea."

"Is my brother not back yet ?"

"He will come home late to-night ; he is at a meeting of the committee."

"It is all right," concluded Sabine ; "mind you do not say a word to any one, Franz."

Sabine sat down again by her table, but her damask was forgotten. She looked out into the dark court, at the window of the volunteer. "He puts his fork through the napkins," she said to herself, "and will make no scruple of piercing the heart of a fellow-creature. So that was the cause of poor Wohlfart's depression. He came here, this wild guest, like a whirlwind over a blooming garden ; and where he passes, the flowers fall to the ground. His life is all confusion, excitement, and bustle ; whatever comes near him is drawn into the wild dance. I too, I too, thou proud and daring spirit, have had the tranquillity of my mind destroyed by thee. I try hard, I struggle day and night, but cannot free myself from his fascination. So handsome, so brilliant, and so eccentric ! He makes me angry every day, yet every day I must think of him, care about him, and be sorry for him. Oh, my mother ! here it was, when I was sitting for the last time at thy feet, that thou gavest me the keys of this house ! Thou laidst thy hands on my heart, and blessed me. May Heaven watch over its every throb !" thou saidst, 'midst tears and kisses. Now protect thy daughter, dear beloved one ; thou that wert a model to me in everything, guard my beating heart ! Strengthen me against him, against his tempting smile and his supercilious raillery."

Thus Sabine prayed. Long did she sit there, taking counsel with the good spirits of the house ; then, after passing her handkerchief over her eyes, stepped resolutely up to the table, and resumed her occupation of counting and replacing the linen.

Anthony was already undressed, and on the point of putting out his candle, when he heard a loud knock at his door, and the very per-



son entered whom of all mortals he least expected to see. It was Herr von Fink, with his whip and usually careless bearing.

"Ah, you are in bed already," the jockey said, sitting down astride upon a chair by Anthony's bed. "Do not disturb yourself; you have written me a touching letter, and Jordan has told me the rest; I come to give you a verbal answer." Anthony remained silent, casting from his pillow dark looks on his antagonist. "You all here are very virtuous and very sensitive people," continued Fink, striking his whip against the legs of the chair; "I am sorry that you took my words so much to heart; but I am glad to see you have so much resolution. You have changed honest Jordan into a real Werewolf," he added, laughing.

"Before I listen to anything further," said Anthony, angrily, "I must know whether it is your intention to make me reparation for your insult before the other gentlemen. I do not know whether others, more experienced in affairs of honour, would be content with such an apology after so great an affront; but I have a feeling that I ought to be content with it."

"You feel rightly," said Fink, nodding his head; "you may be content with it."

"Will you make me an apology to-morrow?" asked Anthony.

"To be sure; why not?" said Fink, indifferently; "I have no mind to fight you, and will with pleasure declare before all the correspondents and agents of the Firm that you are a reasonable and promising young man, that I was wrong to offend one who is my junior, and, begging your pardon, who is much greener than I am."

Our hero listened to these words with mixed feelings. His heart grew much easier; but Fink's manner provoked him, and raising himself up in his bed, he said with decision, "I am not satisfied with this declaration, Herr von Fink."

"Indeed," said Fink, "what do you want more?"

"I am not satisfied with you at this moment; there is less consideration for me in your manner than is becoming towards a stranger. I know that I am young, and know little of the world, and I am sure that you are superior to me in many things, but it is precisely on that account that it would be more amiable in you to be kind and friendly towards me." Anthony spoke this with an emotion that did not escape his adversary, and Fink, stretching out his hand good-naturedly across the bed, said, "Pray don't be angry with me again; shake hands with me."

"I would with pleasure," cried out Anthony, deeply moved, "but I cannot yet; you must first tell me that you do not treat our quarrel so lightly, because you think me too young and too insignificant, or because you are noble, and I am not."

"Listen, Herr Wohlfart," replied Fink; "you put your knife desperately to my throat; but as you lie there in your white shirt, looking so innocent, I will do something more, and come to terms with you. As for my German nobility, that for it!" and he snapped his fingers. "It is of about as much value in my eyes as a pair of varnished boots or kid gloves. Then concerning the question of my respect for your youth, and dignity as a promising novice, I am willing at least to acknowledge that, after what I have known of you this evening, I will henceforth, in any difference we may happen to have,

be ready to give you the utmost possible satisfaction with any murderous implement you may choose." With that consolation, Fink held out his hand for the second time, and said, "Now shake hands; all is right again."

Anthony placed his hand in that which was offered him, and the jockey shook it heartily, saying, "We have been so frank towards each other, that there is nothing more to be said; so good-night. You shall hear more to-morrow." Then he took his cap, nodded to him, and walked off rattling his spurs.

Anthony, it must be acknowledged, was so pleased at this peaceable result that he could not sleep for a long time. Herr Bauman, who was in the next room, and whose bed stood against the same wall, could not refrain, after Fink's departure, from expressing his joy by knocking at the wall, and Anthony returned the signal by doing the same, in order to express his gratitude for this sympathy.

Next morning the whole body of clerks were assembled a quarter of an hour before the arrival of the Principal. Fink appeared the last, and said with a loud voice, "My lords and gentlemen of the export and import business, I yesterday treated Herr Wohlfart here, in a manner which, now that I know him better, I regret sincerely. I apologized to him yesterday of my own accord, and beg his pardon again to-day in your presence. I must at the same time observe, that our Wohlfart has conducted himself most respectably in this quarrel, and that I am glad to have entered into official connection with him." The clerks smiled, Anthony went up to Fink and again shook hands with him, Herr Jordan did the same with both, and the affair was settled.

It did not, however, remain without results; the intelligence of the honourable reparation which Fink had given the junior, and of the peaceful accommodation of the difference, reached the upper house, and when Anthony and Fink made their appearance at dinner, the looks of the ladies rested on the former with an expression of sympathy and curiosity, and the Principal gave him a kind smile. But on Fink, too, Sabine cast a bright glance, and whenever her eyes met his she felt as if she ought to ask his pardon for some great injury.

With the gentlemen of the office, Wohlfart's position was now quite altered, he was treated by all with a much greater degree of respect than is usually accorded to juniors; Herr Specht informed all his acquaintance—and his acquaintance was very extensive—that he was a modern Bayard, the last remnant of the chivalry of Europe, a terrible swordsman in the commercial empire; Herr Liebold was valiant in his assertions, when he observed that Anthony was on his side, and even Herr Pix treated his pupil from that day with evident respect; he relied upon Anthony's observation of the balance of the great scales, as much as upon his own, and sometimes even trusted him with the black brush, his beloved sceptre, the emblem of his sovereignty.

But the greatest change was in Anthony's relations with Fink. A few days after the quarrel, when Anthony was going upstairs, the jockey, who had preceded him, stopped at his door and said, "Will

you not come in? you must pay me your visit to-day, and try my cigars."

For the first time Anthony crossed the threshold of the volunteer, and stopped in astonishment at the door, for the room looked different to any that he had ever seen. Elegant furniture was scattered about in confusion, a thick carpet soft as moss covered the floor, and the orderly Anthony saw with regret the ashes of cigars thrown carelessly on its beautiful flowers. Against the wall stood a large case of arms, and by its side were hanging silver spurs of great weight; the other wall was occupied by an equally large book-case of costly wood, full of books bound in brown calf, and above the bookcase were extended the black wings of a gigantic bird, reaching from one wall to the other.

"What a quantity of books you have got?" exclaimed Anthony, delighted.

"They are the memorials of a world in which I no longer live," said Fink.

"And these wings, do they belong also to your memorials?"

"Yes, sir, they are the wings of a condor; you see I am proud of this booty of the chase," answered Fink, offering our Anthony a packet of cigars. "Sit down, Wohlfart, let us have a chat, and prove whether Herr Specht was right in pronouncing you an agreeable companion." So saying he pushed an easy-chair towards our hero, Anthony settled himself comfortably in its soft cushions, and emitted a cloud of blue smoke, whilst Fink lighted the lamp of the silver tea-kettle. "I was much pleased with you the other day," said Fink, stretching his length upon the sofa; "do you understand anything about horses?"

"No," replied Anthony.

"Are you a sportsman?"

"Not that either."

"Are you a musician?"

"Only in a small way," said Anthony.

"Then in the devil's name, what qualifications have you got?"

"In your sense very few," answered Anthony, provoked. "I can love those who please me, and, I believe, can be a faithful friend; but when I am treated superciliously, I get angry."

"Well, well," said Fink, "I know that side of you. For a beginner your *début* was not bad. I see there is good blood in you. Now tell me who you are. From what race of mortal men do you descend, and what destiny has thrown you into this dull machinery, where everybody becomes dusty and resigned, like Liebold, or gets a lucky chance like the punctual Jordan?"

"It was a kind destiny," replied Anthony; and he began to tell about his parents and home. He described with warmth the little circle in which he had grown up, the adventures of his school-time, and vividly portrayed some ridiculous persons with whom he had intercourse at Ostrau. "And so," he concluded, "my coming here, which you call a misfortune, has been a great piece of good fortune for me."

Fink nodded his approval, and said, "After all, the greatest difference between us, is, that you knew your mother and I did not. For the rest it is all the same in what nest one grows up—one may under

all circumstances become a clever fellow. I know those who have met with less love in their paternal house than you did."

"You have seen so much of the world," said Anthony, considerably changing the subject; "pray tell me how that has happened?"

"It is very simple," began Fink. "I have an uncle in New York, who is one of the aristocrats of the Bourse there. When I was fourteen he wrote to my father to send me over there, as he intended to make me his heir. My father, who is very merchant-like, packed me up and sent me like a bale of goods. In New York I soon became a d—d little scapegrace; I committed every kind of folly and kept a stable of racers, at an age when well-conducted, honest boys, eat their bread and butter in the street, and played with a kite. I spent my money on singers and dancers, and ill-used my white and black servants so much, by kicking them and pulling their hair, that my uncle had enough to do to pay compensation money to these free citizens. My family had torn me from my home without any regard for my feelings, and I in return did not care a fig for theirs. For the rest, the more extravagant I was, the more money I got. I soon became the most notorious among the young tigers, who cultivate fashionable impertinence on the other side of the water. One day, it was my birthday, I was walking home at six o'clock in the morning, returning from a small supper, where I had, out of caprice, affected prudery towards some very obliging ladies, when it suddenly occurred to me that I must make an end of this kind of life, or it would soon make an end of me. Instead of going home, I went to the harbour, dressed myself in coarse sailors' clothes, which I bought on the way, and before noon, started off as a cabin-boy on board a big English vessel. We sailed some thousands of miles, doubled Cape Horn, and went up the other coast of the continent. When we came to Valparaiso, I thanked the captain for the passage, regaled the crew, and went on shore, to make my fortune by my own labour and with the twenty doubloons I still had in my pocket. I soon met with a sensible man who took me to his great hacienda, where I earned no small laurels by my hard riding as a herdsman. I stayed there a year and a half, and was very comfortable; I was treated more as a guest than as a servant, for I was liked, I was admired as a sportsman, and lived in the saddle, what did I want more?—But, alas! all joys must come to an end. One day, when we were going to have a great slaughter of cattle, and I was busily occupied in escorting the animals to the shambles on my horse, suddenly two riders made their appearance in the midst of our festivities, who turned out to be public officers. They treated me with about as much civility as a young bullock, took possession of me and my horse, and led me between them trotting and galloping to the capital, where I was delivered over to the consul. My uncle had moved heaven and earth to trace me out, and, as I learnt by a long letter from my father, that he had been really anxious about my disappearance, I resolved upon going back to please him. I made arrangements with the consul, and returned by the next vessel to Europe. When I arrived at this ancient spot of earth, I announced to my father, that I had no mind to be a merchant, but preferred being an agriculturist. The firm of Fink and Becker were quite beside themselves at this declaration, but I remained resolute, and at last we came to terms. First, I

was to stay two years at a farm in Northern Germany, and then to work for some years in an office; and in this way it was hoped my caprices might be conquered, so here I am in a kind of honourable confinement. But it is all in vain. To please my father I stay here, as I see he has much useless anxiety about me, but I will only remain long enough to show him that I am in the right, and then I will become a farmer."

"Will you buy an estate in our country?" asked Anthony, with curiosity.

"No, sir," answered Fink, "I will not. I should prefer riding all day long, without reaching the boundary of my property."

"Then you will return to America?"

"Or anywhere else; I am not dainty about continents. Meanwhile I am living in this monastery like a monk, as you see," said Fink, laughing, and pouring out a quantity of rum from a large bottle into a small portion of some other materials, he stirred it up with a spoon, and drank the burning mixture with great satisfaction, to Anthony's secret horror. "Be brisk, my man," he cried, pushing the bottle to Anthony, "prepare your drink and let us talk and be jolly, as becomes good companions and reconciled enemies."

After that evening, Fink treated our hero with a kindness which was very different from his careless manner towards the other gentlemen. In a short time Anthony became quite a favourite with him; Fink invited him often into his room, and even condescended to mount three flights of stairs to the sanctuary of the leather-coloured cat, if he happened to be in the humour to pass his evening at home, which, indeed, was a rare case. Anthony soon discovered that his friend was a personage much known and talked of in the town, that he ruled despotically among the fashionable youths, and at races, hunting parties, and other useful occupations, he was the leader and chief authority. He was young and clever, of noble family, and was supposed to be immensely rich, he was a first-rate connoisseur in all that concerned horses, gun-barrels, and gilt tea-spoons, and above all he treated everyone who came near him with the greatest arrogance, which, at all times, has been considered by the great mass of weak people as a sign of superiority. Fink was, consequently, much in society, and often did not return home till morning. Anthony heard him sometimes coming in when he was already at his books; he wondered at the bodily powers of his friend, who, after one or two hours' rest, took his place in the office, and did not show the least symptoms of fatigue. Fink broke also the rules of the house by sometimes coming an hour too late into the office, and leaving it before it closed. Anthony could not discover what the Principal thought of this, as he took no notice of it.

Thus the winter passed away, and signs of approaching spring and summer made themselves apparent, and the boots of the carriers no longer brought snow, but mud into the office. Sometimes a young maiden ventured within the neighbourhood of the indefatigable time-piece with a nosegay of violets. Now the sun shone provokingly on the corner of Herr Liebold's window-sill, then the brokers came and spoke of the yellow bloom of the rape in the fields, and, at last, Herr Braun appeared carrying the first rose in his hand. A year had passed since Anthony had crossed the lake with the swans, during the whole year he had been thinking of that passage.

## CHAPTER VIII.

VEITEL ITZIG still occupied a bedroom in the quiet inn where he had taken up his quarters on the day of his arrival. If, as the police assert, every one must have a home, and if, according to all reasonable people, that home is where a man sleeps, Veitel was very little at his home. As often as he could escape from Herr Ehrenthal's office, he loitered about the streets, keeping a look-out upon all young gentlemen who appeared to him disposed to buy or sell, and he could tell from the air of any passer-by, whether he was accessible or not to the charms of a small bargain. He used to carry about some thalers for show, which he used to jingle in his pocket with such agreeable carelessness, that none but a simpleton could doubt his solvency. He could perceive, at a glance, the most secret flaw in a coat or waistcoat, he had a charming stock of obliging phrases for his customers. Upon principle he addressed the young scholars thus—"Gracious sir, would you graciously allow me"—he understood what is always considered the height of perfection in this business, that is, to mix servility with sneers, and was a perfect master in the art of mock humility. He knew how to brighten old brass with mica, and to give the highest polish to old silver. He was always ready to buy cast-off black coats, which is considered by the initiated as a sign of a daring character; he knew how to give the cloth, by proper brushing, the appearance of freshness, which would just last long enough to dupe the purchasers, whom he generally contrived to find among poor schoolmasters, and apprentices about to be confirmed. Whenever he had an errand to do for Herr Ehrenthal, he endeavoured to do something on his own account, and thus acquired so many customers, as to excite the envy of grey-headed fripperers. But he did not limit his activity to old clothes, though in this branch he obtained his first and most numerous successes; he became an agent of horse-dealers, got into connection with money-lenders, and supplied these worthies with customers. He even lent his own money, and had the generosity never to take more than fifty per cent.; he lent, however, only for a short term, and on the day of payment was always willing to take any saleable article instead of the money, but at his own valuation. He was never tired, would run a hundred times the same way for a few pence, was as happy as a king when he gained a thaler, and cared nothing for the abuse lavished on him.

He allowed himself no time for enjoyment; his only recreation was counting on his fingers the bargains he had made, and reckoning up his gains. It was remarkable how little he wanted. He ate a piece of dry bread in the evening, which he had saved from his dinner in Ehrenthal's kitchen; he only once in the first year treated himself to a glass of small beer, and that on a hot day when he had helped a landed proprietor to sell his carriage, and gained two thalers by his activity. His trading furnished him with his clothes; therefore summer and winter he wore a black evening coat, and corresponding trousers; he even thought it advantageous to wear a gilt chain over his black velvet waistcoat, and appeared always as a gentleman among his equals; because he with good reason maintained that every man of business ought to look so that no one should be ashamed of dealing with him. The result of all this was, that at the end of the first

year he had the satisfaction of seeing his six ducats increased thirty-fold.

He soon became an indispensable member of Herr Ehrenthal's business. Nothing escaped his quick sight; he never forgot a face he had once seen, and he knew the daily state of the Bourse as well as any broker. He continued to fill the more useful than elevated position of an errand-boy, still cleaned Bernhard's boots, and dined at the kitchen-door; but it was evident he would not fail to attain to the desk and leather chair, which, for the sake of appearances, Herr Ehrenthal kept in his small office. This was the object of his ambition, the seat of his paradise. For he was not as yet initiated into the deep mysteries of the business, he was still sent away when any important customer was negotiating with Herr Ehrenthal. He soon discovered that there was some deficiency in himself that debarred him from this good fortune. He spoke German with great volubility, but there was an oriental accent about it, and the grammar was rather rude than polished; he would write business letters and bills tolerably, but they were neither flowing nor elegant, the characters were stiff and the phrases broken, and of the mysteries of book-keeping he was as innocent as a child. This ignorance oppressed him extremely.

At his inn he had in the meanwhile become a person of some consideration. Even Loebel Pinkus treated him with uncommon confidence; for this he had to thank his sharp eyes. The wooden partition in the common room, and the hollow sound of the wall, had disturbed his mind from the first day of his arrival; for weeks he had waited for an opportunity of continuing his researches. At last, one Saturday he feigned illness, and stayed at home, while the landlord and his guests went to the synagogue; during their absence he succeeded in enlarging a cleft in the back of his cupboard, and made a discovery which excited his astonishment. He beheld a large dirty room entirely filled with boxes and chests, and a chaos of valuable things. Gentlemen's and ladies' dresses, beds, linen, stuffs of all kinds, and coloured curtains, were lying together in great heaps; metal utensils also, a crucifix, chalice, and chandelier, were glittering in the obscurity of the room, and other alluring objects of speculation that even his sharp eye could hardly discern. Aladdin was scarcely more excited when he first entered the enchanted cave than was our Itzig at this discovery; he kept it to himself, but was from that day on the look-out, just as a weasel watches a mouse-hole. Sometimes in the night he heard a noise in this mysterious room, and once there was a whispering in which the deep voice of the worthy Pinkus was not to be mistaken; one day, too, when he came home at a late hour, he saw at the next door barrels, boxes, and parcels being loaded on a small carriage, and concealed under a covering of white linen, and the same night two taciturn guests of his landlord's, who came evidently from Poland, disappeared, and did not return; from all this he concluded that his host kept up a traffic in various articles, which, for good reasons, he preferred sending off at night rather than in the day. It was clear to our Veitel that the goods were smuggled over the frontier, and spread through the Russian Empire, where it is well known that everything which is defective in Germany goes. Veitel made use of his discovery with the moderation of a true man of

business; he just alluded to it sufficiently to induce Pinkus to treat him with particular consideration.

After a day of great activity, Veitel returned to his quarters in deep thought, and entered the coffee-room with his usual greeting. He seated himself quietly in a corner, and was considering how he could find out a literary person who would improve his style, and initiate him into the mysteries of book-keeping, for very small remuneration—perhaps for a black coat which he could not get rid of, because the skirts (it had belonged to a gigantic undertaker) were hanging down to the ground like the branches of a weeping-willow. After some time spent in fruitless reflections, he looked up, and perceived a stranger sitting at the table with a pen in his hand, which he occasionally dipped into the ink. This man was talking in a low voice to a dealer, and bent from time to time over his paper, probably taking notes of their secret conversation. Veitel eyed him suspiciously. It was clear that his ancestors had not crossed the Red Sea with Moses. He was short and stout; he had a red turned-up nose, a round face, and looked old; his hair was in disorder, and he wore a pair of old steel spectacles, which he frequently pushed behind his ears, for, in spite of their long service, they could not adapt themselves to the turn-up nose. Veitel observed that this spectacled gentleman was dressed in an uncommonly bad coat, took snuff out of a tin box, and looked at the dealer with a peculiar squint—a kind of inquisitive twinkle, which was intended to give an amiable expression, but did not. There could be no doubt he was a scribe, and Veitel determined upon trying to have some intercourse with him. At last, the negotiation was concluded, and it did not escape Veitel's keen eyes, that the dealer received a paper, and put a ten-groschen piece on the table in exchange, which the other dropped into his pocket carelessly. The dealer went away; the stranger remained, apparently in high good humour, and poured the remnant of a small brandy-bottle into his glass. Veitel approached him; the little man at first looked at him suspiciously, but when he perceived his submissive manner, a smile passed over his face, and he said, in a sharp-toned voice, "Come near, my young friend; you wish to consult me; I am at your service."

Veitel began, with hesitation, "If the gentleman is acquainted with this town, I would ask a favour of him."

"Go on, my son!" replied the other, encouragingly, drinking his glass of brandy, and looking good-humouredly at Veitel.

"I wish to ask you whether you know any one who, for a moderate remuneration, would give instruction to a friend of mine in writing, and in the style which is necessary for business."

"Indeed!" answered the other; "which is necessary for business! And this friend of yours is yourself, my son?"

"Why should I make a secret of it?" answered Veitel, candidly. "Yes, it is me; but I am only a beginner, and not in a situation to be able to give much."

"Who gives little, gets little, my dear. What is your name?" inquired the old man, carelessly, whilst he played with his snuff-box.

"My name is Veitel Itzig."

"Well, then, dear Itzig," continued the old man, "good teaching casts good money. And what is your business?" he inquired, with a paternal expression of countenance.



"I am in Hirsch Ehrenthal's office," replied Veitel, with self-satisfaction.

The stranger now became more attentive. "Herr Ehrenthal is a rich and a clever man. Formerly, I had a good deal to do with him. He has a good knowledge of law. If you wish to acquire a business style, and are with Herr Ehrenthal," he continued, in a tone of reflection, "perhaps it may be done. What remuneration would you give if I should find out somebody?"

Veitel felt it against his conscience to offer anything, and said cautiously, "I do not yet know what would be asked for such instruction."

"Then I will tell you plainly," answered the spectacled gentleman, "I myself might, perhaps, give you this instruction, and perhaps not. Such assistance is not to be given to everybody—I must first make more inquiries about you. But if I should do you this favour, it will be in consideration of your being a beginner, and poor, and of my having leisure, and being more disposed for theory than practice, and upon the condition that you pay me fifty thalers—five-and-twenty before the first lesson, and five-and-twenty more in a month's time, by a bond which I will draw out for you myself."

"Fifty thalers!" exclaimed Veitel, horrified, and he sank down on a chair, as if paralyzed; "fifty thalers!" his lips repeated mechanically, as if the machinery of his brains had ceased to work.

"Is that too much for you?" asked the spectacled individual, sharply. "Let me tell you, my young Itzig, in the first place, I do not deal with saucy striplings; secondly, I have never before granted anybody my assistance so cheaply; and, thirdly, I would not trouble myself a curse about you, if I did not wish to stay some weeks in this room."

"Fifty thalers," repeated Itzig, quite beside himself; "I had thought it would not cost more than two or three thalers, if, perhaps, I had added a waistcoat and a pair of good boots"—here the old gentleman grasped vehemently his hat and spectacles—"and a hat that is as good as new," added Veitel, quickly, seeing the approach of a storm, and having remarked that the hat on the table was very shabby.

"Be hanged, you blockhead," rejoined the old man, with an arrogance which Veitel would not usually have put up with, except from young gentlemen accompanied by Danish bull-dogs; "go and get your teacher at a charity-school."

"Then the gentleman is not a scribe?" asked Veitel, rather depressed, but at the same time resolute.

"No, you fool!" growled the old man. "How could I suppose that Ehrenthal had such a dunce in his office?" he added, in a loud soliloquy. "He takes me for a writing-master!"

"What are you, then?" inquired Itzig, offended.

"One that holds you in utter contempt," said the stranger, decidedly, as he rose from his seat, and, casting a piercing look on poor Veitel, walked out on the balcony. There he squatted down in a corner, looking like a bundle of old clothes, and, drawing out of the pocket of his coat a parcel of papers, studied them eagerly.

Veitel stood disconcerted for a few moments in the solitary room, but at last determined upon obtaining some information about the stranger. He made a pretext for entering the tap-room, and asked

the host, with as much unconcern as possible, the name and position of the little man.

"Don't you know him, then?" said Pinkus, with an ironical smile, and whether it was intended for him or the stranger, Veitel could not tell. "Beware how you make his acquaintance. As for his name, ask himself for it; he knows it better than I."

"Though you place no confidence in me, I will in you," answered Veitel, and related his conversation with the stranger.

"And so he would not give you instruction?" said Pinkus, astonished, and shaking his big head. "Fifty thalers is a great deal of money, certainly; but many a rich man would give a hundred times that, to know what he knows—that I can tell you. For the rest, it is no affair of mine what you learn, or from whom," concluded Pinkus, in a surly tone, and returned to his brandy bottles.

Veitel went upstairs, even more puzzled than when he came down, and seated himself again in his corner, considering how it was possible to ask such an unheard-of sum of money for so trifling a service. Meanwhile, the host had come upstairs, placed a light on the table, and brought a simple supper for the new guest. Quite contrary to his nature, he was very courteous in his manner towards him—even went with him to the balcony, and had there a short conversation, of which Veitel discovered himself to be the subject.

When Pinkus returned with the stranger into the room, he said to Veitel, "This gentleman will remain here some weeks, and does not wish it to be talked of. You must tell no one that he is here, however you may be questioned."

"I do not even know who this gentleman is," said Veitel; "how, then, can I tell anybody that he is living here?"

"You may rely upon that young man," observed Pinkus to the stranger, who replied with a careless nod. The host, contrary to custom, left the candle burning, and took his leave, wishing them good-night. The gentleman made himself comfortable, ate his supper, giving from time to time a glance at Veitel—just as an old raven might look at a chicken which, with juvenile inconsiderateness, had ventured to come near him.

Whilst the old man sat winking at his prey, a sudden idea came into Veitel's head. This mysterious person, who made such enormous demands, might, perhaps, be one of those select few who possess receipts by means of which poor tradespeople make their fortunes; and the thought created a glow within him. It was true the stranger did not look rich or fortunate; but was it not possible that the old coat might be only an incognito, or that he might be a miser, or that, for some reason, he was unable to make use himself of his own receipts? Perhaps the fifty thalers was the price of the secret. Veitel had already seen enough of the world to know that neither the ointments of quacks nor magic wands could produce any such effect, but that knowledge of some kind was necessary for it. He understood that the great object was to be more cunning than other people, and that such cunning was not always safe for the possessor himself. It even occurred to him that the use of it might lead him into the danger of binding himself to Satan. But his desire to know more got the better of his scruples. His hands shook, as if with fever, and his pale face glowed as he again left his corner, and, going up to the stranger,

said, "I must take the liberty of asking one question. I have heard that an art may be learnt by which one can secure good luck in all business, and make bargains at the best prices. If there is any such art, as I have been assured, I would ask the gentleman whether it is that which he says he could teach me if he would?"

The old man pushed his plate away, and looked at the lad with an odd twinkle of his eyes. "Thou art the most extraordinary fellow that I have yet met with. Thou art either a great fool or the most crafty actor I have ever seen."

"No; I am only a fool, but wish to become clever," said Veitel Itzig. "A curious fellow indeed," observed the old man, bluntly, moving his spectacles so as to see Veitel more distinctly, who felt very uneasy under the cold glare of the spectacles. After a long examination, the old man said, with a protecting air, "What thou, my son, callest art, is nothing but a knowledge of law, and cleverness in applying it always to one's own advantage. He who knows that will become a great man—nothing can hinder him, for he cannot be hung." As he spoke these words, the old man laughed in a kind of way that frightened even our Veitel.

"This art of dealing with the law," continued the little man, "is not easily learnt, my son—it requires long practice, a clear head, decision at the right time, and, above all, what the learned call character." Here he again laughed.

Veitel was aware that he had arrived at the decisive moment of his life; he put his hand into his pocket, laid hold of his old pocket-book, and held it for a moment in his trembling hand. In that moment—and it was only a moment—what wild and painful feelings passed through his poor soul! They crowded on one another quick as lightning. In that moment he thought of his poor mother in Ostrau, an honest woman, how she had sold her gold chain in order to be able to sew the six ducats into his leather pocket. He saw her before him as she blessed him at his departure with tears in her eyes, and said to him, "Veitel, the world is wicked; gain your bread honestly, Veitel!" He saw also before him his white-headed father, lying on his death-bed, with his white beard hanging down over his thin body—and he took a deep breath. But he thought also of the fifty thalers, how much trouble it had given him to gain them by chaffering, how many ways he had run for them, how often he had been taunted about them, and threatened with a beating for his importunity. When this thought crossed his mind, he drew the pocket-book violently out of his pocket, flung it on the table, placed his clenched fist upon it, and cried out, with flashing eyes, "There is the money!" He uttered these words hastily and eagerly, in a state of feverish excitement; but, whilst he did so—ay, even at that very moment—he felt that he was doing evil, that he was binding a heavy load upon his breast; yet still he was resolved. Little did those young gentlemen think, who drove the importunate Jew boy from their doors, that their scornful speeches had raised a demon in that poor, bewildered human soul, which, in after years, would draw down upon themselves ruin and misery.

Some hours later the candle burnt deep in its socket, and cast a lurid glare over the desolate room—Veitel was still sitting, listening with open mouth, flushed cheeks, and glistening eyes, to the teaching of the old man. And yet he was talking only of bonds and bills.

At last the light was extinguished; the old gentleman had emptied the fresh-filled brandy-bottle, and, worn out with his long talk, had fallen asleep on his straw bed; but Veitel was still sitting on his stool. That night he was not thinking of his customers, nor of the money he received; he was writing bonds on the black walls, in which the words were as numerous as the obligations he took upon himself were few, and he contrived, by almost imperceptible additions, to make the repayment dependent on his own pleasure. He continued for some time in this way, sitting in the dark, and great drops of perspiration ran down from his temples; then he opened the door of the wooden gallery, leant against the rail, and looked through the dusk upon the river, which, like a great stream of ink, rushed past him; and again he wrote bonds on the dark shadows of the houses opposite, and on the dark river he wrote receipts, until his weary body sunk down exhausted, and he fell asleep in a corner, leaning his burning head against the wooden wall. The cold night-breeze swept over the water, and the stream rushed gurgling and complaining against the piles and prominences of the old houses. What he had drawn in the shadow passed away, what he had written on the water was dissolved, but that night he had written a bond on his soul which would one day be required of him, with interest—ay, and compound interest. The wind howled, and the waters wailed, wild messengers of warning and avenging justice.

After that night Veitel hurried every evening to his inn, and continued regularly to receive instructions in the art of managing business. The spectacled gentleman was thoroughly well-grounded in his subject, he was familiar with the deepest secrets of the law of exchange and mortgages, he knew every loophole which the law keeps open for clever men to escape through, and every bye-way by which legal obligations may be avoided. His method of teaching was excellent. In every imaginable case he went into every detail, taught his pupil all the laws concerning them, and rendered his lessons clear and agreeable by giving examples; he then told him the various methods by which each law might be evaded, and every obligation set at naught. Every night Veitel carried off some valuable receipt in his pocket-book, models of documents, some of which bound you to nothing, while others bound you to much more than appeared. Sometimes the old man wrote these masterpieces himself, made his scholar copy them, and then carefully burnt his own handwriting.

We will now relate shortly what Veitel ascertained by degrees concerning the name and history of his master. Herr Hippus had seen better days, he was formerly a lawyer in great request in the capital, who had in a few years succeeded in obtaining very extensive practice. With the business public of a large town, every lawyer acquires a certain distinct reputation, which may, however, be as insecure as the reputation of a singer or dancer. By this class, Herr Hippus was considered a very clever advocate, obliging in his intercourse with his clients, and particularly dexterous in turning a doubtful right into a certain one. In the beginning he was as little inclined as the most conscientious attorney-general could be to make his fortune by twisting wrong into right, and he had a painful feeling of uneasiness when he had to plead a bad cause; in short, he

differed very little from the most honourable of his colleagues, except in having a few less scruples, and being rather too fond of claret—this was his weak point. He was a man of caustic wit, and an excellent boon companion at table; he had a subtle intellect, enjoyed witty paradoxes, and loved to split hairs. His love of claret led him into other extravagances, and he was soon obliged to endeavour to increase his gains. In order to gratify his vanity by showing his subtlety, he was led frequently to employ all his brilliant powers in securing the success of a bad cause. Thus, unhappily for him, as often happens to lawyers who succeed in desperate lawsuits, all those who had a bad cause to defend went to him; for some time he was annoyed by it, and he only required a little more moral courage to enable him to get rid of this “thieves’-practice,” as he himself called it; but gradually, by dint of making the bad appear the better cause, he became bad himself. As his wants became greater so did his temptations, and his conscience less. Thus while he continued to keep up an appearance of respectability, and so dazzled people by his brilliant talents, that it was prophesied he would end his career with the greatest practice, and become the richest man in the town, he was hollow within and poisonous as a dry fungus. At last, however, even he, the cunning adept in legal chicanery, was caught—he was accused of having twisted the law in a cause which could only be gained by the most desperate means. He was found guilty, ignominiously discarded, and disappeared as a fallen star from the circle of his colleagues. Whatever remaining scruples of conscience he had, now rapidly disappeared. He had made very little real money, but had numerous uncertain claims on the property of others; bad bonds and other similar documents, the acquisition of which, it is true, had cost him very little. To exact these was now the object of his life, as his passion for spending still continued, and he was therefore, for many years, an indefatigable plaintiff at the law courts. What he gained by lawsuits he spent in coarse debauches in bad company—he became a drunken, dissolute rake. But this irregular source of income ceased at last, his name disappeared by degrees from the judicial rolls, and he was no longer seen even in the dining-rooms of persons in the lower ranks, he was degraded into a frequenter of the lowest taverns, and became a pettifogging attorney, who incited others to make lawsuits and was the adviser of swindlers and sharpers. He had occupied himself in this way for some years, and gained sufficient by the mischief he did, to satisfy his spite against those who had not fallen like himself; and to slake his insatiable thirst. Unfortunately for himself he had not succeeded in escaping entirely from the eye of the law. Just at this period he was prosecuted for illegal practice, and found it advisable to disappear for some time under the pretext of a long journey; he therefore took up his quarters at Herr Pinkus’s, whose customer and legal adviser he had occasionally been, and thus had leisure to give instructions to young Itzig.

But Herr Hippus did not proceed without due caution. Whenever he taught his pupil any piece of roguery which, like an arabesque, wound round the straight line of business, he never failed to observe with an ugly grin, “I only tell you this, that you may beware of it;” and this was a standing joke between him and his scholar, even after

the latter had shown uncommon sharpness and aptitude to become an apostle of these mysteries.

These lessons soon became a necessity to the old man's heart. Yes, his heart, for black as it was, he still desired to unburthen it. Now, for the first time for many years, he had an opportunity of developing his knowledge, showing the powers of his mind, and infusing into another a sort of respect for himself. He had been an accomplished and acute lawyer, and although the life of debauchery he had led had impaired his faculties and obscured his knowledge, there was enough still left to make a great impression on a youth like Itzig, to whom he opened the doors of his mind with a melancholy pleasure—the noblest impulse the outcast had experienced for many years. Veitel's attention flattered him; he began to consider him as a creature of his own creation, and by degrees took quite an affection for the Jew boy, which he used often himself to make jokes about, though it was a source of happiness to him. For the good in human nature is indestructible, and traces of it will remain in the most corrupt characters. This remnant of a better nature is always seeking to develop itself; but the curse of a corrupt character is, that even its best feelings but too often turn to mischief and sin.

The scholar soon became an object of more importance to the old man than any one else on earth. He looked forward with impatience to the hour when the industrious lad should come for his evening lesson; indeed, he sometimes kept some of his supper and brandy for him; and when the Jew boy was sitting opposite to him eating the cold meat with voracious appetite, the old man watched him with silent enjoyment. Once when Veitel had caught a cold in bad weather, and was lying in a fever under a thin coverlid on the straw bed, the old man, wonderful to relate, brought him his own feather-bed, which the host had allowed him as a privileged person, and spread it over the lad; and when Veitel returned him a grateful smile, the old fellow was delighted.

And Veitel deserved these marks of friendship, for he treated the old man with as great veneration as ever was shown by a scholar for the most renowned teacher. He offered to obtain for him a new suit of clothes at prime cost, and was always ready to go to the expense of filling the brandy bottle, as he knew that to be the weak point of his worthy master; he confided to him all his petty bargains, occasionally made him a present, and after a lucky day even ran to the butcher's to buy him a sausage. But even this tender friendship was not without its thorns; the old man could not help sometimes, when under the influence of brandy, venting his bile upon his pupil, which Itzig returned by calling him most unpleasant names, thus proving that his feeling of veneration was not inexhaustible. On the whole, however, these two honourable men agreed perfectly, and became indispensable to each other.

During the months that the old man passed in his hiding-place, Veitel learnt something more than mere bad professional tricks; he learnt to speak and write German more correctly, and sometimes read the books which he fetched for Hippus from a small circulating library. He delighted in reading adventures by sea and land, the conquest of America, and other exciting enterprises, with which his imagination used to connect all kinds of commercial speculations. He

learnt much also from his teacher of life in general, and the history of nations, especially of the country in which he lived, and of which he had hitherto known but little. Thus in a few months an alteration took place in him which did not escape Herr Ehrenthal.

This gentleman remarked that Veitel became less uncouth, spoke and wrote more correctly, and, above all, showed in his transaction of business a confidence and a knowledge of law which was surprising in such a beginner. Herr Ehrenthal spoke to his family of this change, just as a farmer would speak of the promising appearance of a young bull; and at the end of the quarter he announced to the lad of his own accord that the boot-cleaning and dining at the kitchen-door should cease, and that he was ready to give him a place in his office, besides board wages and a small salary.

Veitel received this announcement, for which he had been so long waiting, with the greatest composure; he thanked him humbly, and promised everything, both for the present and future. "I have still one request, sir, to make, a very great request, which I hope you will not receive unfavourably. Might I have the honour of dining once a week at your table? As you have shown me so much kindness, pray add to it this mark of consideration, that I may learn how to behave in good society. You can deduct it from the board wages you intended to give me."

Ehrenthal shook his head, and, astonished at such a demand, said, "I must first ask my wife whether she will approve of your polishing your manners in my house. You must wait till I have done so." He entered his wife's room, and communicated to her Veitel's request with the air of one who wished it to be understood that, as a man of the world, he considered the request an improper one, though in his heart he wished Itzig's petition to be granted, as he thought it important to keep the clever lad in his service. But he did not dare to express this wish openly to his wife, for Madame Ehrenthal had much more knowledge of the world and refinement than himself, and was a great authority with him in all that regarded the manners of society. She was the daughter of a great mercer, had a great taste for fashions, and decided opinions about furniture, tea parties, and other things that distinguish refined from vulgar people. Contrary to his expectations, Madame Ehrenthal received Veitel's request without any surprise, but this was to be accounted for by the pains he had taken to get into this lady's good graces. "If the young man," she said, "wishes to improve his manners, he could not find a better place for it than in our family circle; and since he is useful in your business, as you tell me, it will be desirable for him to know how to eat and talk like other people."

After this decision, Veitel was asked to make his appearance the following Sunday at the family dinner of roast goose; and when he approached the well-covered table, dressed in the best of six dress-coats that he had in store, a cotton shirt with stiff collars, and a smart waistcoat, holding a new white hat in his hand, he was introduced by Herr Ehrenthal in a pompous speech. "Young Itzig has been received into my office as book-keeper; it is therefore not fitting for him any longer to assist in the household work, and it will be proper to treat him from this time as a gentleman. You may sit down, dear Itzig, at the bottom of the table."

## CHAPTER IX

ONE warm summer evening, Fink said to Anthony at the close of the office, "Will you accompany me to-day? I am going to try a boat on the river which I have had built here." Anthony assented. The two young men jumped into a caleche, and drove to the river at a spot above the town, where a colony of boatmen and fishermen were living in miserable cottages. Fink pointed to a round boat floating on the water like the shell of a huge gourd, and said in a tone of vexation, "There lies the vessel, a real horror! I cut a model with my own hands for the carpenter, for they do not know how to build a keel boat in this country; I gave the blockhead all the measures, and yet he produced such a gull's egg as that!"

"It is very small," answered Anthony, with gloomy forebodings.

"I tell you," called out Fink, angrily, to the carpenter, who approached, taking off his hat respectfully, "that you are answerable for our lives; we shall infallibly be drowned in that nutshell, and it will be all owing to your want of common sense."

"Sir," said the carpenter, shaking his head, "I have made the boat exactly after your instructions."

"The devil you have!" exclaimed Fink; "you shall be punished by coming with us, and you will see how well you deserve it by being drowned with us."

"No, that I shall not do, dear sir," answered the man, resolutely, "with that wind I will not risk it."

"Then stay on shore and cook pap for your children out of shavings. Give me the mast and sail." Fink fixed the little mast, examined whether the ropes of the sail ran easily through the holes, and whether the clue-line could be drawn. All these nautical contrivances being found satisfactory, he lifted out the mast and sail again, laid them along the bottom of the boat, threw in some pieces of iron as ballast, fastened the rudder, seized two long oars, and made our hero take his seat. He then put out his oars, and pulled from the shore with the strength of a sailor. He made the gourd dance on the surface of the water, to the great delight of the carpenter and the neighbours who were assembled on the bank, and expressed his satisfaction at Anthony's sitting so calmly. "It is possible for a keel boat to go against the stream," he said, "that was all I wanted to prove to those muffs." Then he replaced the mast, loosened the sail, put the lower end of the jib into the hands of his scholar, and instructed him how to draw and slacken it. The wind blew in irregular blasts, now the small sail was puffed out, and the edge of the boat inclined down to the water, now they flapped inactive against the mast. "It is a miserable cockleshell," cried out Fink, angrily, "we drift on unmanageably, and shall be upset directly."

"If so, I propose that we should return," said Anthony, with affected composure.

"Never mind," replied Fink, coolly, "we will get to shore again somehow. You can swim of course?"

"Like lead," answered Anthony; "if we are upset I shall go down to a certainty, and you will have some trouble in getting me up again."



"On no account lay hold of me when you are in the water," rejoined Fink, that would be the surest way of keeping us both down; wait quietly till I can give you a lift. For the rest there will be no harm in taking off your coat and boots, it is more comfortable to be in *negligée* when one is in the water." Anthony obeyed him willingly.

"That's right," said Fink. "After all it is a wretched amusement, sailing about here; no waves, no wind, and finally no water—there we are again aground. Now, push away—hey, Mr. Boatswain, what would you say if that ugly shore were to disappear suddenly, and we were floating on a decent sea, water as far as the horizon, waves as high as that tree, and a stiff breeze that blows away one's ears, and lays one's nose down on one's cheeks?"

"I cannot say that I should find it very pleasant," answered Anthony, somewhat anxiously.

"Indeed," said Fink, "there are few situations which are so bad, that they might not become much worse. Do you not think that even in that case, it would be a great piece of luck to have these worthless planks between us and the water, but how would you like it if our bodies were on the billows without boat, without shore, betwixt huge waves?"

"I at least should be lost," exclaimed Anthony, really terrified.

"I tell you I have a friend, a very good friend on whom I can rely in such a crisis, to whom something of the kind occurred. He walked down to the sea-shore one glorious evening, determined to bathe, undressed, and went into the water. He swam gaily on, the waves rocked him up and down, the water was pleasantly warm, the ocean glittered in the setting sun with a thousand different colours, above him shone the golden light of that fine old sky, he shouted with delight."

"And you yourself were the man?" inquired Anthony.

"If it so please you, yes—I went on swimming for a while till I saw by the waning light that it was time for me to leave my water-cradle for the terra firma. I turned round and took my course to the shore, and what do you think, Master Wohlfart, I saw?"

"A ship," exclaimed Anthony; "or perhaps a fish."

"No," said Fink, "I saw nothing, the land had vanished, I strained my eyes on all sides through the twilight, I raised myself on the waves as well as I could, there was nothing to be seen but water and sky. The current which sets in from the shore had closed with me surreptitiously. I lay on the Atlantic Ocean, between America and England, thus much I knew, but this geographical knowledge availed me very little in my position. The sky grew darker, the hollows of the waves seemed filled with ghastly shades, the sea ran mountains high, nothing was to be seen but the grey sky tinged with red and the wild rolling flood of waters."

"That was terrible!" cried out Anthony.

"It was a moment, when no priest could prevent a poor soul calling on the devil for help. By the sky I knew in which direction the land lay, but the question was which would be strongest—the current of the sea, or my arm. A mortal struggle commenced between me and that perfidious rascal of a sea-god. The lessons of the swimming schools would not have helped me much. I rolled like the sea calves, and other savage animals, and paddled with my hands by turns. I

struggled on, it was a hard fight, the hardest of my life; meanwhile it grew dark, the emerald green of the waves changed into a flood of black liquid pitch, their crests only sparkled with white foam, rising like skulls and spitting at me; the dark grey sky hung over me, sometimes a single star shone through the clouds, that was my only comfort, so I swam on through the black and grey, towards the boundless. No land was yet to be seen, I became weary, and the utter darkness around almost inclined me to give up the useless struggle; the clouds gradually covered the sky, the stars vanished, the direction became doubtful, and my position hopeless. I felt that all was over. My breast heaved, numberless sparks danced before my eyes like glow-worms on the way to hell; then, my boy, as half conscious I slid down with a wave, I felt something under my foot that was not water."

"It was the ground," exclaimed Anthony.

Fink nodded assent. "It was firm sand. I was five miles north of the spot where I left my clothes on the shore, and fell down exhausted like a slain seal." He broke off and cast a scrutinizing glance on Anthony, "And now, my mate, prepare yourself, for I am going to give a strong pull and turn to the shore, only be calm!"

At that instant a heavy squall blew over the water, the mast creaked, the boat went over on its side, and at last its keel went right up into the air like the back fin of a fish. True to his promise, Anthony sank to the bottom without uttering a word. Quick as lightning, Fink dived into the water, and raised his companion as he had promised, to the surface, and by great exertion placed him on a shallow spot, from whence he could wade to the shore.

"Why do you not take my arm, and be hanged to you?" called out Fink, panting.

But Anthony, who, contrary to the agreement, had swallowed a good deal of water, had only sufficient consciousness to make a deprecatory movement with his hand.

"I believe he wishes to go down again!" exclaimed Fink, angrily, at the same time seizing hold of him round the waist, and carrying him to the shore.

A crowd of people had assembled, and rushed down to the edge of the water, where Fink was holding the young sailor in his arms, and energetically exhorting him to recover his senses. At last Anthony opened his eyes, and showed by this, and some other movements, that it was not yet his intention to abdicate his position in society. "How are you, Anthony?" said Fink, looking anxiously into his pale face. "You have taken the matter too much to heart, *Poncho y Ponche!*" "A cloak and a glass of rum for the gentleman," he shouted to the bystanders; "that will bring you round quickest."

A hurdy-gurdy man readily took off his old soldier's cloak; our hero was wrapped up in it, led like a wounded warrior to the carpenter's house, and there placed in an arm-chair.

"There goes the pumpkin, sails, oars, and everything," said Fink, angrily, to the carpenter, "and our coats into the bargain. Didn't I tell you that the thing was good for nothing?"

For a whole hour Fink nursed his victim with the greatest tenderness, stirred up the sugar himself in a glass of grog, and sometimes pressed Anthony's cold hand within his. It was dark before

Anthony was sufficiently recovered to be able to walk home. They completed their toilet with the assistance of the coats and boots of the boat-builder, and laughed at their attire as they returned. Fink had resumed his usual cool demeanour, and our hero, pale, but merry, stumbled along by his side in highly-greased boots, "Mind, Fink," he said, "when you invite me again to a party of pleasure, I beg you to understand that I would rather drink anything than that slimy water; I am still full of it."

"How the deuce could I think, my young innocent, that you would swallow with such avidity half the river! I have never in my life seen any one go down so like a child. You are a marvellous fellow!"

The following day was Sunday, and the birthday of the Principal. On this important day, the clerks used to stay some time after dinner in the drawing-room, and took coffee and cigars. When they sat down to dinner, the aunt said to Fink: "We hear that you and Herr Wohlfart were in great danger yesterday; the town is full of it."

"It was not worth speaking of, madam," answered Fink, carelessly; "I only wanted to see how Master Wohlfart would behave himself in drowning. I upset him in the river, and there he would have remained lying at the bottom, thinking it indiscreet to trouble me to save him. Only a German is capable of such polite resignation."

"But Herr von Fink," exclaimed the aunt, horrified, "that was tempting fate! It is dreadful to think of."

"The filthy muddy brook, which you honour with the name of river, was dreadful. They must be very dirty nymphs that live at the bottom of it. But Wohlfart did not in the least mind their mud, he fell enthusiastically into their arms, just as is said in his excellency's famous song—'*Halb zogen sie ihn, halb sank er hin*.'\* He threw both his legs over the side of the boat before it was necessary."

"You had told me to do so, sir," called out Anthony, from the other end of the table.

"Indeed," Fink continued to the aunt, "I acted as a friend to him. It is not my fault that he swallowed so much water, that the river is quite low to-day, and the zinc ships of our Firm are sticking on a sand-bank in the upper part of the stream. Before the accident I gave every kind of good advice. I told him a long story, to show him how to conduct himself in the water; I pointed out to him what toilet was necessary for falling decently into it; in short, I could not have been more careful of a brother. But it was all of no use. He darted down to the bottom as if he had been shot from a pistol, and located himself in the mud with the dexterity of a carp: I assure you it was a difficult task to find him there. I believe he was already in tender converse with some of the aquatic beings when I discovered him, for he waved his hand, as much as to say, Don't disturb me, I am enjoying myself quietly."

"Poor Herr Wohlfart!" exclaimed the aunt, in amazement. "But what about your coats? This morning I met a policeman in the house, carrying the wet bundle under his arm, from whom I first heard of your misfortune."

"The coats were fished out this morning below the town," said

\* "Half he sank, and half they drew him in."

Fink ; "Karl was in despair of ever getting them dry again. Mean while Wohlfart's boots are making a trip to the sea."

Anthony reddened with anger at his friend's way of talking, and cast a shy glance towards the upper end of the table. The merchant looked severely at the thoughtless Fink. Sabine sat pale with down-cast eyes; the aunt only was loquacious in her lamentations about the soaked coats.

There was more solemnity on this occasion about the dinner than usual. After the second course, Herr Liebold rose to execute the important task allotted to him in consequence of his position,—of drinking the health of the Principal. He did his best not to weaken the force of his first wishes, by weaker ones in the conclusion, but even this toast did not avail to disperse the restraint that prevailed at the upper end of the table."

After dinner the gentlemen took their coffee, standing in groups round the Principal, and some of the bolder ones, like Herr Pix, ventured even to light a cigar. Meanwhile, Anthony occupied himself in walking through the suite of rooms, admiring the pictures, and turning over the leaves of an album, in order to save himself from being bored. Finally he took to examining the pattern of the carpet and making new fanciful arrangements of it, when having arrived at the door of the last room, he suddenly stopped, thunder-struck. At a few paces from him stood Sabine near a flower-table, by which she was holding fast with both hands, while big tears fell from her eyes upon the flowers. There was a suppressed sobbing, and a struggle that shook her slender figure as if with a spasm; she was struggling against the outburst of some long-repressed secret sorrow, with an earnestness which made her doubly interesting. Anthony was confounded at having by accident become witness of such a scene, but felt so deeply interested that he quite forgot to withdraw, and when at last he turned in order to do so, Sabine's attention was attracted by the noise. Quickly composing herself, she passed her handkerchief over her eyes, and addressed herself immediately to Anthony. "Take care, Herr Wohlfart," she said, kindly, "that your friend's temerity does not get you into some new danger; my brother would be very sorry if your intercourse with Herr von Fink brought you into any trouble."

"Frauline Sabine," answered Anthony, respectfully, gazing on her eyes still moistened with tears, "Fink is as noble-hearted as he is inconsiderate; he saved me at the risk of his life."

"Oh yes," exclaimed Sabine, with an expression which Anthony did not quite understand, "Herr von Fink likes trifling with all that is most sacred to others."

At that instant Herr Jordan came and requested the young lady to play on the piano, and she hastily left Anthony.

Anthony was much excited by what had passed. Sabine Schroeter was held in great respect by the gentlemen of the office, and was never made the subject of common conversation. Most of the younger ones had during the first months of their stay been desperately in love with the daughter of the house, as Anthony gathered from the jokes of their colleagues, and their occasional confessions, and though the flame had burnt down for want of fuel, each had kept a little remnant of burning coal still smouldering in the most secret corner of his heart.

where it was safe from the jokes of friends. All were ready to fight anybody for her sake. To all she appeared to be a cold saint, whose heart was inaccessible to any passion or weakness; but her calm demeanour pleased them, and when Herr Pix called her proud, he never failed to add, "But she has a kind heart, and is an excellent housewife."

Whether Sabine was exactly what his colleagues unanimously represented her, Anthony could not decide, for to him also the young mistress was only known, and was quite as far off, as the moon, of which we never see but one side. Every day he sat opposite to her, and gazed at a distance on her beautifully-shaped face, her dark hair and the deep light on her beautiful eyes; he daily heard her voice in the conversation at the dinner-table; but that was all he knew of her. Now he had suddenly discovered that the saint was not so calm and insensible as was supposed in the lower house. By chance he had become, as it were, the confidant of her secret grief. That sorrow, so silent and so admirably borne, raised his sympathy to an enthusiastic pitch. He had never had a sister, but often longed for one. He now felt a truly fraternal affection for the sorrowing lady; he would have given his life to deliver her from this load of grief; he would have thought it the greatest happiness, to press her hand within his, to lay her head upon his breast, and kiss her weeping eyes. All at once it suddenly occurred to him that her grief was somehow connected with Fink; he had for some time observed that there was some mysterious attraction between the two, and he had often scrutinized Sabine's countenance when Fink was making himself agreeable at the dinner-table, but he could never discern anything, except that her eye shunned the place where Fink was sitting, and that she addressed him less often than any of the others. Now he began to fear all kinds of sorrows for her; he saw in his mind's eye wild storms of passion sweeping over the sunshine of the house of Schroeter. He felt, indeed, for Fink that kind of devoted affection with which ingenuous youths are apt to regard their more clever and experienced companions; but in the present case his heart took a decided part against his friend. He determined upon watching Fink narrowly, and endeavouring to become a kind of fraternal protector, a confidant who would help her to throw off the sorrow for which he felt such warm sympathy.

Some hours later, Sabine was sitting at her window, with her hands folded upon her knees, and her eyes cast down. The setting sun threw a bright radiance over her face, which was not in her heart. Her brother laid his paper aside, and looked from his arm-chair sorrowfully on the motionless figure; at last he approached her gently, and put his hand upon her head. She rose and clasped her arms round his neck. Thus they stood, the one leaning against the other, the friends of childhood, who had lived so entirely united in heart, that, without a word, one could understand what moved the other. The merchant stroked softly his sister's hair, and said with a troubled voice, "You know how great are the commercial obligations we owe to Fink's father?"

"I know," answered Sabine, looking up, "that you are not satisfied with the son."

"I could not avoid receiving him into our circle, but I repent the hour when I did so."

"Do not be hard upon him," said his sister, kissing his hand imploringly; "remember how much there is that is noble in his character."

"I do him no injustice, but it is doubtful whether his life will bring happiness or mischief upon others. His self-respect, his great talents, even the defiant power of his egotism, are materials for forming a great character. But upon what will he employ his powers? A dissipated roué, he has hitherto spent his time in wild follies; the restraint of our house is insufferable to him. He will probably turn out either a bad aristocrat, wasting his powers in luxury and enjoyment, or a usurious money-maker, like his uncle in America, choosing money as his last toy, and with wicked cleverness, making use of the weakness of others, to build his palaces on the ruins of their fortunes."

"He is not heartless," said Sabine, in a low voice; "his connection with Wohlfart shows that."

"He plays with him, throws him into the water, and drags him out again."

"No," cried Sabine, "he respects Wohlfart's good sense, and feels that, in spite of his want of experience, he has a mind superior to his own."

"Do not deceive yourself, or me," returned the merchant, gloomily. "I know that his self-confidence, his conversational gifts, and his easy, sprightly manner, always making himself appear superior to the society about him, have fascinated you. I have watched, not without some fraternal anxiety, the spell which this stranger has cast upon you. I kept silence, as I felt I could trust you, and was myself a little carried away by his many uncommon qualities. Even when I discovered the hardness of his character, I did not speak, for I saw that you withdrew yourself from him. But now I find your heart is still agitated, made unhappy by him, I consider his removal necessary. He shall leave your presence and our house."

"Good God!" exclaimed Sabine, wringing her hands. "No, Traugott; that must not be. For my sake a connection must not be broken which was formed for his advantage. If there is any way of preserving him from the dangers which result from his past life, it is by his staying with you. Your energy, and the high reputation of your Firm, seeing all this, and getting accustomed to it, will reclaim his character. Yes," she continued, clasping his hand, "I have no secrets from you. You have seen the foolish weakness of my heart, perhaps sooner than myself, but I promise you that this feeling shall for the future be only like the recollection of a book that I have read. By no look, no word, will I betray that I have been weak. Don't be angry with him; don't send him away from our circle, not in anger, not on my account."

"And am I to allow his presence to inflict upon you a harassing struggle?" asked her brother. "Our intercourse with him was difficult enough without that. He is considered a brilliant match in every sense of the word. It is probable that his father has formed decided plans for him, and that he himself has fantastical dreams for the future. His father intrusted to me the control over this intractable

youth, because he felt confident that I would act according to his views. It would be treason against him if I were to encourage, even silently, any approximation between you. Our innocent kindness to him might easily be interpreted into a wish to secure the rich heir to ourselves, and he himself, insolent as he is, and accustomed to easy conquests, would be the first to harbour such thoughts, and disposed to triumph at what he would call your weakness and my calculations. I hear him laughing and jesting over it, and I tell you, Sabine, that it is revolting to my pride."

"Do not forget," exclaimed Sabine, "that I am your sister; I am a citizen's child, and he never can be one of us. I am as proud as you, and always feel that there is a gulf betwixt him and me, so broad and deep, that no amount of love could fill it. Have confidence in me," she added, imploringly, whilst tears fell from her eyes; 'you shall see nothing in me to annoy you any more. But be kinder to him, though you do not like him. Bear with his faults, remembering what his lot has been. Tossed about in the world, in positions where every passion was fostered, always amongst strangers, without love or home, thus has he grown up, corrupted in many respects, but noble at heart, and an enemy to all meanness.' Again she embraced her brother, and looked up to him imploringly. "Have confidence in me, and be kinder to him."

"He may stay," said the merchant, touched, and gazing at his sister's tearful eyes. "But besides you, my darling, there is another in the house who must beware of his influence."

"Wohlfart!" said Sabine, cheerfully; "I will answer for him."

"You undertake too much, you guardian of our clerks. So he is also a favourite?"

"He is kind-hearted and honourable, and clings to you with his whole soul. How ingenuous he looked when the other was joking about him so pitilessly! And he has courage too. Be assured he will go on well with Fink. I met him by accident, when Fink had offended him, and there was something quite touching about him. Ever since that I have given him a place in my heart."

"What does not find a place there?" asked the merchant, laughing. "First, and above all, the store-room; then grandmamma's nutwood press, filled with fine white linen; then in a modest side-room your worthy brother; then—"

"Then in the ante-room all the rest," interrupted Sabine.

"Yes, and now I find even our new under-clerk lodged there," continued the brother.

Sabine nodded assent. "He is my clerk too, having been made by his father a child of our Firm. And, by the by, he wants a dozen fine shirts, so Karl has reported to me. My aunt and I are to furnish them, and you must send them to me by the post at the first opportunity; he was accustomed at home to these kind of surprises, and aunt will write him a mysterious note to accompany them;" and she laughed heartily at the idea of the aunt's note.

"Good," replied the merchant; "now you are yourself again."

"We must have our little amusements," said Sabine. "You men do nothing but plague us."

Whilst this was going on, Fink entered Anthony's room, humming

a tune, without any idea of the storm that was gathering in the upper house ; and, to tell the truth, caring very little for the feeling excited there. "I am in disgrace on your account, my boy," he exclaimed, gaily ; "our sovereign has treated me to-day with awful coldness, and the black curls have not vouchsafed me one glance the whole day. Respectable people, but terribly matter-of-fact. The girl has fire, pride, many good qualities, but even she begins to stagnate in this eternal monotony. If a fly scratches its head, it astonishes them, and they doubt whether it is decent for the creature to scratch with its right or its left leg. I wish you joy, Wohlfart ; you are in a fair way to become the pet of the Firm, and I am considered your bad genius. It doesn't signify ; to-morrow we will go to the swimming-school."

And so they did. From this time Fink took pleasure in initiating his young friend in all his accomplishments. He taught him to swim, insisted upon his learning to ride, and used all his fraternal persuasion to induce him to go out on a quiet hack ; his friendship even went so far, that he mounted his pupil on his prancing charger, while he himself rode the hack, to which he had the greatest aversion ; he shot with Anthony at a target, and threatened him with an invitation to a hunting party, which Anthony, however, declined most positively.

Anthony rewarded his friend with the most devoted attachment. He was delighted to have a companion in whom there was so much to love and admire ; and it flattered him to be distinguished by him as his confidant before so many others. Fink did not profit less by it ; what in the beginning had been a caprice soon became a necessity. Those were happy evenings when they sat together under the shadow of the great condor's wings, or in the modest quarter of the yellow varnished cat, gossiping over the impressions of the day, the course of the world, or about nothing ; then Fink told anecdotes or made fun, wild as a boy ; and Anthony listened with delight to the powerful thoughts and bold expressions of his experienced companion—their laughter rang through the open window into the depths of the court, so that old shaggy Pluto, who acted as policeman of the house, and was considered by every one as a respectable partner in the Firm, awoke from his light slumber, and by his cheerful bark expressed his appreciation of their joyous humour. It was a happy time for both ; and out of this intercourse arose the first real friendship that either of them had ever had.

Yet Anthony did not desist from watching Fink and the young lady with secret disquiet ; he never spoke to his friend of his suspicions, but he lived in continual expectation that something would happen in the upper house, either a betrothal or a breach between Fink and the merchant, or some other extraordinary event. But nothing of the kind happened ; the solemn dinners at the long table went on without any change. The countenance and manners of Sabine towards his friend and himself also remained unchanged. It seemed as if the active and engrossing occupations of the house removed from the life of its inmates every passion, every sudden change ; ill-temper and quarrels, enjoyment, and imagination were all alike kept down by the unceasing and uniform flow of the tide of business.

Another year had passed, the second since Anthony's entrance into



the house, and the roses were blooming again. When the business of the day was over, he went out and bought a great bunch of the red clustered rose, which he took to Herr Jordan, to adorn his room, as he knew he was fond of flowers. To his surprise he found all his colleagues assembled there, the same as on the first day of his arrival; and he saw at once that on his entrance a solemnity and restraint became visible on the countenances of all, which made him draw back. Jordan hastened towards him with an air of embarrassment, and begged him to leave them for an hour, as they had something important to discuss which he, as an under clerk, was not permitted to know. These kind-hearted men had hitherto seldom allowed him to feel that his position was inferior to theirs in the house, so that this exclusion hurt him a little. He carried the nosegay to his own room, and placing it despondingly upon the table, took up a book, from which he occasionally looked off to gaze on the roses, which seemed to cast a glow over his little room.

Meanwhile an important meeting was held in Herr Jordan's sitting-room. He knocked with his ruler on the table, and then opened the debate: "You all know that one of our colleagues has left the house. Herr Schroeter, in consequence, has informed me to-day that he is inclined to receive our Wohlfart in his place, as correspondent in the provincial branch. But, as the usual term of probation will not be over for another year, or indeed, according to our custom, two years, he will not make so extraordinary a deviation from the rule without the consent of the office. Therefore I ask you, gentlemen, whether you are willing to give up your rights over Wohlfart as our junior, and receive him as a colleague? I beg you will give me your opinions. I am bound to add that Herr Schroeter himself thinks Wohlfart quite fit for this new position; and moreover, that I think it very courteous in our Principal to leave the decision to us."

This speech of Herr Jordan was followed by that imposing silence which often precedes a debate. At last Herr Pix rose from the back of the sofa, over which he was sitting astride, and said, "Before we go on, I vote that we have some grog; some one else may fetch the tea-kettle for those who drink tea, but I will make grog." After this declaration the speaker resumed his riding attitude, and lighted a manilla, a kind of cigar which he patronised in opposition to his colleagues.

The other gentlemen maintained a solemn silence, gravely watching the preparations for tea; each of them felt the importance of his social position, and his dignity as man and colleague.

When all was ready, no one beginning to speak, the chairman saw the necessity of proceeding with the discussion, and inquired, "How are we to vote? Do you wish to begin from above or below?"

"In the English navy the youngest is listened to first, as far as I know," remarked Herr Bauman.

"Then it shall be as in the English navy," decided Herr Pix.

Specht was the youngest of the colleagues present. "I must first remark," he said, with some agitation, "that Herr von Fink is not here."

There was a general murmur. "He is not at home! He is a volunteer."

"He is not one of us," said Herr Pix.

"He would decline voting," said Jordan, "as he is not a regular member of the Firm."

"Then it is my opinion," continued Herr Specht, rather put out by the general opposition his first observation had met with, "that Wohlfart ought to continue four years as a junior, as I did, or at least three, as did our Bauman at C. W. Strumpf and Kneisol. But as he is a good fellow, and, as we all agree, clever in the business, I am of opinion that we may make him an exception, and acknowledge him at once as a colleague. Yet I beg you will take care to point out to him that he ought to be a junior still; so I propose that he shall be bound to make our tea for another year as he has done as junior, and besides that, I consider it would be proper for him to mend a pen every quarter for each of his colleagues, as a remembrance of his former position."

"Stuff and nonsense!" grumbled out Herr Pix; "you have always such ridiculous ideas."

"How dare you call my ideas ridiculous!" exclaimed Herr Specht indignantly; "you know I will not bear this from you."

"I must beg for peace," said Herr Jordan.

The other colleagues then signified their acquiescence, Herr Bauman especially, with great warmth. At last Herr Pix, seizing the cock of the tea-urn, said, "Gentlemen, what is the use of talking further; his knowledge of goods is not trifling, considering what a young chap he is, his manners are easy, and the servants respect him; towards my customers he is still a little too delicate and ceremonious, but it is not everybody who knows how to manage others. He plays badly at solo, certainly, and drinks too little punch. These are his qualities; but as the two latter are not what should decide the question, I do not see why he should not, from this day, be admitted as our colleague."

The cashier said, "It is irregular that any one should finish his probation in two years; but as the Principal wishes it, I shall make no opposition, for, after all, his will ought to be respected."

All eyes were now turned on Herr Liebold, who was much embarrassed by this general attention, which reminded him of the responsibility of his vote. Of course he wished to consent; but if he did not? if he opposed, what a row it would make! What would Wohlfart think of him? What would his colleagues and the Principal himself think of him? He pulled up his shirt collar, smiled blandly on all sides, hemmed as people do before the opening of a powerful speech; but then confused at the idea of all the possible consequences of his giving a veto, sank back overpowered in his chair, and declared he would consent to whatever his colleagues determined.

"Agreed then," said Herr Jordan. "I also consent; and I have to state one more reason; Wohlfart was older than any of us when he entered, and his age and education leave nothing to wish for, and I am glad of our unanimity. Herr Schroeter has authorized me, in case of our approval, to inform Wohlfart of it. I propose to do this on the spot, we will send for him."

"Yes, yes, that we will!" exclaimed all; and Bauman prepared to go.

But Herr Specht jumped up and stopped him. "We are not pigs," he said, stretching out his hand before the door; "we are not

wild beasts, to rush in such a disorderly way to receive a new colleague, as if he were one of a herd. I beseech you to think of the honour of our Firm. It is necessary that a deputation of two should go to him, and at least two bowls of punch be made; and Jordan must welcome him with a speech."

This motion met with applause. Herr Liebold and Herr Pix were chosen to bring in the new colleague. Herr Specht inspected the room with searching eyes, arranged the tables, placed the chairs in a semi-circle on both sides, fetched bottles and glasses, and placed on a tobacco-box in the middle of the table, a green paper-maché knight carrying a gilt sword. Then he fetched a carpet and laid it between the door and the company, that Wohlfart might stand on it like a bride before the altar. He exhausted all his eloquence to get candles and lamps from the rooms of his colleagues, and collected them together in a group. Finally, he drew down the blinds, closed the coloured curtains, and produced, first, an artificial dusk, and then an uncommonly brilliant light, which was accompanied by a strong smell of lamps. Thus he succeeded in giving the room a strange and mysterious appearance; the others at first only looked on, but afterwards, carried away by the example of his zeal, they assisted actively. At last he allowed the deputation to go upstairs, and a vague recollection having come across him of the imposing appearance of the Roman senate, who sat motionless in their chair when the enemies of Rome entered, he urgently implored those who remained to sit silent and immovable in their places in a circle. When the door opened, and the astonished Wohlfart, who had not an idea of what was going on, appeared between his two guides, one of whom, Herr Pix, brought with practical forethought Anthony's sugar-canister, and the other carried his nosegay; the Roman senate vanished from the imagination of Herr Specht, and the three wise men or holy kings, with their gifts, Christmas, and Christian ceremonies took its place. He sprung up in an ecstasy and exclaimed, "Let all stand up."

By this change of ceremonial he unluckily spoilt the effect of the scene, as only one part of the gentlemen followed his example, the others remained sitting. Then Herr Jordan went up to Anthony, and said with hearty cordiality, "Dear Wohlfart, you have been working with us for two years, you have taken pains to learn the business, and you have won our affection. It is the wish of the Principal, and ours, that the customary term of probation should be shortened for you. Herr Schroeter intends to receive you to-morrow as one of the regular clerks, and we are allowed the pleasure of informing you of it to-day. We heartily wish you joy, and trust that we may ever continue friends." Here the kind-hearted Jordan ended his address, and offered his hand to his pupil.

Anthony stood for a moment bewildered, then seized it with both his, and, overpowered with happiness, threw his arms round his neck. The other colleagues then gathered round him, and there followed a shaking of hands and embracing unexampled in the annals of the Jordan room. Again and again Anthony went from one to the other shaking hands with tears in his eyes. Specht did not even regret the ruin of his ceremonial by this ebullition of feeling in the new colleague; Bauman sat delighted in a corner with his hands over his knees; Pix offered our hero his cigar twice in the course of five

minutes, and even held the candle for him to light it. All were in the best humour; the colleagues were proud of having a share in giving him such an important privilege, and Anthony was charmed to receive such kindness. He sat in state in an easy-chair placed for him by his friend Specht, before him stood the green knight in the midst of the bunch of roses, saluting him with his gilt sword, and around him were his colleagues, all endeavouring to add to his enjoyment. Herr Pix rose and proposed the health of Anthony with an eloquence unusual to him: he described how he had come to them as a mere baby, who was as ignorant of the difference between a penholder and a cinnamon-stalk, as a greenfinch is of the art of making coffee, and he had made such striking progress in so short a time by means of the great scales, which had been, as it were, a cradle to him, and of the packer who had nursed him, and by the co-operation of another individual whom modesty prevented him from naming. Then Anthony rose and proposed the health of his colleagues. He told them how alarmed he was when he for the first time opened the office-door. He reminded Herr Pix of the black brush with which he had pointed out the way to him. Herr Specht of his habitual question, "What is your pleasure?" and Herr Jordan of the over-sleeves which he had put away when he conducted the new comer to his room. These playful allusions to the distinguished attributes of the three gentlemen were received with great applause. Toast followed toast, and, to the astonishment of all, even the quick Birnbaum, clerk of the customs, displayed an extraordinary gift of nature, for, after the third glass, he actually spouted some rhymes, the company became more and more merry, the lights shone brighter, and the cheeks assumed a more rosy hue.

It was late when the colleagues separated. Anthony would not go to bed without telling Fink of his happiness. He hastened to meet him on the stairs, and informed him of the great event. Fink cut a figure of eight in the air with his whip, and said, "It is good that the upper house should have entertained such a capital idea. I should not have suspected our despot of such an act of enthusiasm. You'll get into the great world now a year sooner."

Next morning the Principal summoned the new clerk into the small room behind the inner office, the sanctuary of the Firm, and listened with a smile to Anthony's thanks. "I have acted thus," he said, "because you are clever, and also on account of the letter you brought me at your entrance. It will be a satisfaction to you to know that from this time you will be able to live by your own exertions. You will from to-day occupy the place and receive the salary of the clerk who has just left."

At dinner the ladies congratulated him; Sabine even advanced to the lower end of the table, where Anthony stood behind his chair, and greeted him warmly. The servant placed a bottle of wine before each gentleman; the Principal raised his glass, and nodding to the happy Anthony, said, "Dear Wohlfart, to the memory of your good father."

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## CHAPTER X.

ONE Sunday morning, 'Anthony was busy reading Cooper's "Last of the Mohicans," while the first snow-flakes were dancing their waltz before the window, and in vain endeavouring to reach the asylum of the yellow cat; Fink dashed into the room, shouting out almost before he entered, "Anthony, show me your wardrobe." He opened the press, examined carefully the evening coats, then all the others, shook his head, and concluded the scrutiny by saying, "I shall send my tailor to take your measure for a new suit of clothes."

"I have no money," answered Anthony, laughing.

"Nonsense!" replied Fink; "the tailor will give you as much credit as you like."

"But I should not like to take anything upon credit," returned Anthony; and, settling himself comfortably on the sofa, prepared to maintain the cause of economy against his energetic adviser.

"For once you must make an exception to your rule," said Fink, decidedly; "it is time that you should see more of the world; you must come into society; I will introduce you."

Anthony rose up blushing, and exclaimed eagerly, "That will never do; I am quite unknown here, and have not the position to give me sufficient self-possession to appear in high society."

"For that very reason, because you have no social courage, you must come out," said Fink; "you must get rid of this pitiful shyness as soon as possible—the sooner the better; it is the stupidest fault a civilized man can have. Can you waltz? Have you an idea of a quadrille?"

"I took dancing-lessons in Ostrau some years ago?" replied Anthony.

"Never mind; you shall take dancing-lessons again. Frau von Baldereck confided to me yesterday that several families wish to arrange a dancing soirée for their new-fledged March chickens, that they may learn to use their wings to save them from hawks. The dancing-lesson is to be in Frau von Baldereck's house, who wishes to train her own chicken for the market. There's something for you. I shall introduce you there."

Anthony was much alarmed at this announcement. He placed himself again on the sofa, and said with all the composure he could muster, "Fink, this is one of your mad fancies; it is quite out of the question that I should think of it. Frau von Baldereck belongs to the aristocracy, and no doubt the dancers will belong to the same circle."

"Without doubt," assented Fink; "the purest blood flows in their blue veins. The great-grandmothers of all the ladies, without exception, had the honour of carrying the Princess Thusuelda's nightcap after her through our primeval woods."

"Well, then," said our hero, "how can you be so absurd as to think of taking me into that society! You would only expose me to the annoyance of being rejected, or, which would be still worse, of being treated with arrogance."

"I have no patience with you," exclaimed Fink; "it is just you, and such as you, that have more right to hold your heads high in

society, than most of those that you meet there; and it is just such as you who encourage the pretensions of these young gentlemen by your awkward conduct, partly from shyness, and partly by cringing to them. I should not have thought that in your mind there was room for such meanness."

"You are wrong," Anthony answered, with some irritation. "I do not consider myself lower than I am, but it would be foolish and presuming in me to force myself into the society of others, who, for any reason whatever, do not wish to see me. It is my self-respect which forbids my having intercourse with those who consider a man inferior because he works in an office."

"But I tell you these people will be pleased with you, I answer for it," said Fink, persuasively. "You do not know the society, and think everything too difficult. They are in want of gentlemen. I am in favour with the lady of the house—which, by the way, I am not at all proud of. She has begged me to introduce some young men of my acquaintance to her; I will take you there; the thing is quite simple. Examine the matter; what is this dancing-lesson? It is a kind of joint-stock company for the improvement of the deportment of all who partake in it. You will pay your share like any other; and whether you twirl round a young countess or a citizen's daughter, it is all one—a waist is a waist; the brats are all fond of dancing."

"It will not do," said Anthony, shaking his head; "I feel that I should not be in my proper position."

"I will make you a proposition," said Fink, impatiently; "you shall call with me, one of these days, on Frau von Baldereck; I will introduce you as Anthony Wohlfart, from the office of T. O. Schroeter; you shall say nothing about the dancing lesson, but wait to see how the good lady receives you. If she is not perfectly gracious, and does not herself begin upon the subject, you shall be at liberty to persist in your refusal. Come, you cannot object to this."

Anthony hesitated and reflected; the matter did not appear to him by any means so simple as Fink represented it; but he was not in a state of mind to look at it coolly. For years he had nourished a secret wish in his heart, a longing for the easy, dignified, and refined life of people of rank and fortune. Whenever he heard the music in the merchant's drawing-room, whenever he read the accounts of what was going on in aristocratic circles, and often when quite alone, there awoke within him the sweet remembrance of a high turreted castle, surrounded by its flowers and its park, and of the noble child, accompanied by the swans, who piloted him over the lake. Now the picture rose up vividly before him in the golden light which his own poetical imagination had cast over it. He no longer hesitated, but springing up, consented to the proposal of his more experienced friend.

An hour later, the tailor came, accompanied by Fink, who himself directed all the details of the new toilette with a degree of knowledge that astonished the tradesman no less than Anthony.

In the afternoon, the November sun having melted the snow from the pavement, Fink, after putting some strange-looking papers into his pocket, sauntered leisurely through the crowded streets, looking sharply about him, like a policeman searching for his prey. At length, with an expression of satisfaction on his countenance, he crossed over to the opposite side of the street, to meet two smart young gentlemen,

who, like himself, were lounging in the midst of the stream of plebeians who were taking their Sunday walk. They were Lieutenant von Zernitz and Herr von Toennchen, both of them men of enterprising spirit and indisputable taste.

"Der teufel! is it you, Fink?"

"Good day to you, gentlemen!"

"Why are you mooning about in the street?" inquired Herr von Toennchen.

"I am in search of men," answered Fink, in a melancholy tone, "of two honest fellows who are depraved enough to drink a bottle of port in the day-time, on this tedious Sunday, and who will act as witnesses for me in a small matter of business."

"As witnesses?" asked Herr von Zernitz. "Are you going to fight a duel behind the church?"

"No, my fine cavalier," answered Fink; "you know that I have forsworn that bad habit since little Lanzau shot the cock from my pistol. I am most peaceable just now, a mere man of business, and a worthy son of the firm of Fink and Becker. I am in want of a notary and witnesses for a document which I am anxious to draw up, the sooner the better. The notary there is no difficulty in finding, but, being Sunday, the usual public witnesses are gone to play at skittles. It would be humane in you to help me to pass this unlucky afternoon, by going for a quarter of an hour to a notary, and then adjourning to the *Italiano*."

The gentlemen assented willingly. Fink took them to a well-known notary, and begged him to draw up a deed of cession in the presence of these two witnesses; as the cession must be made without loss of time, and it was a matter of the greatest importance, he handed him a respectable-looking document written in English, in which the attorney-general of some province in the State of New York declared authentically that Herr Fritz von Fink was proprietor of the territory called Fowling-floor, as well as of the soil, as of the buildings, trees, waters, and all produce thereof. Then he declared before the notary that he ceded all the rights of property belonging to him in consequence of that document, to Herr Anthony Wohlfart, at that time in the commercial house of T. O. Schroeter, full payment being made for it. Finally, he earnestly begged the notary to finish the deed of cession as soon as possible, and to keep the whole matter secret. This gentleman promised it, and the two witnesses signed the agreement. On leaving the house, Fink begged of them also, with greater earnestness than was usual to him, to consider this act as a great secret, and above all to observe the strictest silence on the subject towards Herr Wohlfart himself. Both promised, though their curiosity was excited; and Herr von Zernitz could not help remarking, "I hope, Fink, you have not made your will, for in that case I should be glad if you had left me your rifle."

"If you will accept the rifle from the living Fink," replied the latter, "you will make him very happy."

"The deuce!" exclaimed the good-humoured lieutenant, almost alarmed; "I did not mean that. I doubt whether I could accept it with a good conscience."

"Don't scruple to do so," said Fink, kindly; "I am tired of the rifle, and it will be in good hands."

"It is a costly gift," replied the lieutenant, still with some compunction of conscience.

"It is an old barrel," said Fink, "and to-morrow you must positively take it without further hesitation; to-day you will not get rid of me; let us go to Feroni's. But as to the mysterious cession of the property, I am not acting entirely as a free agent. There is a kind of political secret involved in it that I cannot impart to you—indeed, the thing is not quite clear to myself."

"Is it a large estate, then, which you have given up?" inquired Herr von Toennchen.

"An estate?" asked Fink, raising his eyes; "it is no estate! it is a country—mountain and valley, water and wood—a small portion, indeed, of America. And you ask whether Herr Wohlfart's property is large? What do you call large? What is the meaning of large in this quarter of the globe? In America the size of landed property is measured on quite another scale to what it is here in a corner of Germany. As for me, I shall probably never again call such a property my own."

"But who, then, is this Herr Wohlfart?" inquired the lieutenant.

"You shall soon make his acquaintance," answered Fink; "he is a nice youth from the country, over whom a strange destiny is hovering, of which he himself knows nothing as yet, and must know nothing; but enough of business. I have my plans for you this winter. You are both rather old lads to be sure, nevertheless you must take dancing lessons again."

As he said this they entered the *Italiano* together, were received by Feroni with profound bows, and were soon absorbed in discussing the merits of strong Portuguese wines.

Frau von Baldereck was the mainstay of the fashionable society, which was composed of the families of the country nobility, and some of the higher civil and military officers. It was difficult to say what it was that had placed this lady in that distinguished position; she was neither of very high family, nor very rich, nor very accomplished, nor very witty, nor very gossiping, but she had a small share of all these qualities. In her private life she had always maintained her principles as much as possible, and had self-respect enough not to obtrude herself upon those who made great pretensions. In consequence of this moderation she had been raised in public opinion. She had a very extensive acquaintance, was made the confidant of all the marriages and family histories of the provincial nobility; her name was among the first in the invitation-lists of every distinguished house, and even as a widow kept a good establishment herself, which was made apparent by the feathers of her *chasseur*, and her pair of sleek horses. Frau von Baldereck was, besides, a person of tact, who formed a quick and accurate judgment of persons and events, according to the prejudices of the society in which she lived, her judgment, therefore, was received everywhere with great respect. She was kind-hearted too; but for this she was, perhaps, less valued in that society, than by the recording angel who keeps an account in heaven of the deeds done by men upon earth, and who, according to the usage of his holy office, writes at the top of the pages of his book, instead of the earthly credit and debit, the words *sheep* and *goats*, putting all



the favourable items on the right page and all the faults on the left. Frau von Baldereck, who had a daughter that promised to be very much like her mother, occupied a first floor with spacious rooms, where, for a series of years, frequent rehearsals of processions, dramatic performances, and tableaux vivants had been held.

This influential lady was engaged in a confidential consultation with her dressmaker; she was discussing how low the dress might be cut in order to show off the perfect bust of her daughter, and yet not to provoke any remarks at the dancing lesson, when her favourite, Fink, was announced, she dismissed her daughter and the dressmaker, and hastened to the drawing-room to receive him.

After some introductory remarks on the events of the last party, and the long curls of the Countess Pontak, Fink, who was kicking about a footstool on which the young lady of the house had worked a sleeping terrier, said, "I have done your commission, my lady, and bring you three gentlemen."

"And who are they?" asked the lady of the house, drawing near to her ally, and in her anxiety not noticing the maltreatment of her worsted quadruped.

"First, Lieut. von Zernitz," said Fink.

"A great acquisition," exclaimed the worthy lady, with delight, for the lieutenant was considered a man of talent, as he wrote nice verses in family albums, as well as to lost sweethearts; he was first rate in private theatricals, and had the reputation of having written a story for an annual—"Herr von Zernitz is a delightful companion."

"Yes," said Fink, "but he cannot bear port wine. The second is Herr von Toennchen."

"An old family," remarked the lady of the house; "is he not rather wild?" she added, timidly.

"By no means," answered Fink; "the family have always been well-principled; he is not too wild, only sometimes he leads others into mischief."

"And the third," asked the lady.

"The third," said Fink, "is a certain Herr Wohlfart."

"Wohlfart?" inquired the lady, surprised and somewhat discomposed, "I do not know the family."

"That is very possible," answered Fink, coolly; "there are too many people, with and without names, for one to know them all. Herr Wohlfart came here some years ago from the country, to learn the secrets of a commercial house with his own eyes; he is placed at Herr Schroeter's exactly like me."

"But, dear Fink!" remonstrated the lady.

Fink took no notice, but threw himself back in his chair, and looked at the arabesques on the ceiling. "Herr Wohlfart is a remarkable and interesting young fellow; there is something peculiar about him; he himself is the most modest and honest fellow that I ever met with; he comes from a distant part of the province, from Ostrau, and is the son of a defunct magistrate; but there is some secret connected with him, of which he knows nothing."

"But, Herr von Fink—" the lady again endeavoured to interpose.

Fink continued to regard attentively the tracery of the ceiling, and proceeded; "He is at this moment possessor of a landed property in America, the title of which went through my hands in the strictest

confidence; he himself knows nothing about it, and for the present the matter is to be kept secret from him. In my opinion he has the prospect of possessing one day some millions. By-the-by, did you know the late Grand Duke?" and Fink made a significant gesture with his hand.

"No," said the lady, with curiosity.

"There are people," added Fink, "who maintain that Anthony is a speaking likeness of him; mind, what I am telling you is my secret; my friend himself lives in complete ignorance of all these circumstances, by which his whole future may possibly be decided; the only fact known is, that the late Emperor on his last journey through this province stopped at Ostrau, and had a long secret conference with the clergyman of the place."

The last part of this was essentially true, as Anthony had mentioned it to Fink as one of the recollections of his boyhood; he had also added, that the clergyman had been chaplain to a regiment in the last great war, and that the Emperor had asked him if he had served in the army, and in what corps. Fink had not thought it necessary to describe these little details.

Frau von Baldereck's curiosity was aroused by these artful insinuations, and she declared herself ready to receive Herr Wohlfart at her house.

"And now I have one request to make," said Fink, rising; "what I have told you about my friend, my good fairy"—the fairy weighed more than twelve stone—"must remain a secret between us: I can confide in your discretion not to occasion any embarrassment either to me or Herr Wohlfart." He uttered the name in such a tone, as almost to convince the lady that the chrysalis hid in the commercial office, would soon appear as a prince of the Aleutien or Kurile Islands, or with some other unheard-of rank.

"But how am I to introduce the gentleman to my friends?" she asked, as Fink was taking his departure.

"Only as my particular friend; I guarantee him in every respect, and am sure that our society will have great pleasure in receiving him."

When Fink got into the street he muttered out most disrespectfully, "That old fool rushed like a duck into my decoy, and dived down to the very bottom for my lies. As the child of good honest parents, the poor boy would have been scouted, but now that they think some foreign potentate, to whom they consider it an honour to cringe, takes an interest in him, they will treat him with civility, which will charm my pet. Who would have thought that the old sand-pit, on the shore of Long Island, and the ruined fowler's hut, would have helped me to such fun."

The seed sown by Fink had fallen on a fertile soil. Frau Baldereck, like a prudent lady, had some private objects of her own in view in these dancing lessons. Above all she was a mother, and in fact had a design upon no less a person than Herr von Fink. Her daughter was fifteen, and Fink possessed all the advantages which she could desire for her future husband; he was in all respects a splendid match, and therefore she was convinced that he would make her daughter happy. By long experience she knew that private dancing parties were excellent opportunities of showing off very young ladies in the most

favourable point of view to rather *blasé* young gentlemen; the main difficulty consisted in persuading these to join in such pastimes. She had had some apprehension that Fink would not have any great taste for them, but to her surprise he had expressed himself rather warmly in their favour, had promised to waltz at her house the whole winter, and had even made it an express condition, that Fraulein Eugenie should accept him as her favourite partner. It was on this account, that the triumphant mother was so anxious and busy about the fit of the dresses, when Fink came to recommend his *protégé* Anthony to her, and to please him, she might have made the sacrifice of introducing an office-clerk at her dancing-rooms, even if he had not given him such an extraordinary recommendation, and excited her interest by his roguish allusions. Probably she doubted a little this extraordinary account, for Fink's stories were not always to be relied upon entirely; but her maternal love moved her to give credit to this obscure and unsatisfactory tale. She hurried to her friends to impart to them the acquisition she had made in gentlemen, and gave importance to Herr Wohlfart by her mysterious hints. When she found that the little she could tell was confirmed by the equally mysterious hints given by two other gentlemen of character, she became persuaded herself that there was something extraordinary in the case. After a few days a whisper passed through the distinguished society, that a commoner was to appear at the dancing-lessons, a gentleman of immense property, for whom the Emperor of Russia had bought boundless estates in America.

Some days later, Anthony was taken by Fink to the house of Frau von Baldereck, dressed in a new coat, with kid gloves, a victim to the powers of darkness who were about to destroy his heart's peace: there they were, hovering about the noble lady's house, and cast their spells upon him as he entered the hall. They were sitting on the square lantern which was suspended from the vaulted ceiling; they were hanging with outspread hands to the balustrade of the stairs and rolling their tongues at him through the openings of the banisters and laughed with a sneering laugh. Fink was indignant when he saw his victim blushing with anxiety, and whispered to him, "Mind you don't blush before these people," then flung his greatcoat to a servant, and let our friend into the presence of the lady. As Fink had prophesied, she was all kindness; she regarded the handsome shy youth who stood before her, with his honest frank countenance, evidently disposed to yield to her influence, with a mixture of curiosity and womanly sympathy.

Anthony owed low, and said, "Nothing, madam, but my friend's assurances that you would not be angry with me has given me courage to pay my respects to you."

The lady smiled graciously—or, as the captious Fink would have it, made a grimace—and replied, "Herr von Fink has led us to hope that you will be a regular guest during the winter at our dancing-lessons."

Upon this Anthony, who could not help blushing and looking very happy, assured her that he would do so with great pleasure, if he could be sure of not being in the way amongst persons who were strangers to him.

This idea was, of course, eagerly set aside, and then Fraulein

Eugenie entered. Anthony was presented to her, also, and she made him a pert curtsy, as young ladies of fifteen are apt to do to strangers. At the end of a quarter of an hour, Anthony descended the staircase with his mentor, Fink, enchanted with the pleasant manners of the family. The innocent youth took his friend's arm quite delighted, and assured him that he had never thought that intercourse with great people would be so easy.

Fink muttered something that might either pass for a confirmation of this opinion, or the contrary; and then said aloud, "On the whole I am satisfied with you. In spite of the new coat, you sat with all the ease of a little angel in a transparent cambric shirt; however, these primitive manners do not suit you amiss, only that cursed blushing, you must leave that off this winter; it may pass with a black cravat, but with a white one it is abominable: you look like an apoplectic Cupid."

Frau von Baldereck, on the contrary, thought the modesty of the mysterious youth very touching; and when her daughter pronounced with decision, "Fink is quite another style of man; I like him much better," she shook her head, and said with a smile, "You don't understand these things, my child; there is a nobility and a natural grace in the stranger's manners, a certain charm which is quite bewitching."

The great day was come on which the dancing-lessons were to be solemnly opened. Anthony dressed in a hurry at the close of the office, and entered Fink's room. The mentor made an attentive examination of his pupil's dress. "Show your pocket-handkerchief," he said. "Coloured silk! For shame! Here is one of mine; pour some scent upon it. Where are your gloves?"

With similar instructions he led his friend to the illuminated house of the baroness.

While Anthony was descending the stairs, the door of Jordan's room opened, and Herr Specht, stretching out his long neck, popped his head over the banister, and cast curious glances at his colleagues.

"He is going!" he shouted to those in the room; "it is unheard of. Such a thing has never happened since the world began; there are real nobles to be there. It will make a fine story."

"After all, why should he not go if they invite him?" said the good-natured Jordan, wishing to deprecate his colleagues' silent reproaches.

No one could say anything against that; only Herr Pix exclaimed, in a tone of irritation, "I don't like his accepting such an invitation. His place is in the office, and with us. He will learn no good from these swaggerers, having dust thrown in his eyes, and sucking sweets; and that will not be the worst of it."

"Strange things go on in these dancing societies, as I am told," said Herr Specht; "extremely frivolous love stories, and duels every day. But Wohlfart had always a turn for such things. One of these mornings he will walk out with his pistols under his arm; but how will he come back? That I cannot tell. Not on his feet; that is certain."

"Nonsense!" answered Pix; "there are no more quarrels among them than among others."

"And he must talk French," continued Herr Specht, without stopping.

"Why not Russian?" cried out Herr Pix. Here a dispute arose between Herr Pix and Herr Specht as to the language that was spoken in the drawing-room of Frau von Baldereck. But all the colleagues were unanimous that this participation in the dancing-lessons was a most audacious and portentous step for Wohlfart, which would occasion inexpressible mischief, and disturb the entire order of mankind.

"He is gone!" exclaimed the aunt, as she returned from a consultation with the footman.

"That is another trick of his friend Fink," said the Principal.

Sabine kept her eyes fixed on her needlework. "I am glad," she said at last, "that Fink is using his influence to procure his friend some amusement. He himself is not fond of dancing; so far as he is concerned, these parties are rather a sacrifice than a pleasure." The brother cast a searching glance at his sister, who answered it with a gentle nod. "We cannot grudge Wohlfart passing a little time with other people; he is more at home than all the other clerks. Almost every night when I go to bed, I see the lamp burning in his room. The others have relations or old friends to go to, but he is quite alone. He has no society but what this house gives him; it is hard to live in that way the whole year round."

"He has kept quite steady hitherto," said the Principal; "we shall see whether it lasts."

"But how was it possible for him to get into that society?" exclaimed the aunt. "Only think, that Frau von Baldereck—"

Sabine tapped with her thimble on the table. "Fink has insisted upon it," she said, "and that was kind of him; and as a reward, he shall to-morrow have his favourite dish, in spite of the serious face of our Principal."

"What! ham dressed with Burgundy sauce?" cried out the aunt. "But how will Wohlfart look among those uniforms? And how will he get on with those gay men of the world? He cannot compete with them; he has not money enough."

"Let him take care of that," answered Sabine, laughing. "We need not trouble ourselves about it."

"He is gone," said Karl that evening to his father. "Small, varnished boots! I fetched them myself; Herr von Fink forbid his putting on shoes and a new hat, all new from top to toe. That is the way one should look when one goes to dance with the gentlefolks."

"Would you, too, like to dance?" inquired his father.

"No," answered Karl, "but I should like to see how they behave at a ball."

"Look in at the 'New Moon' next door; there you may see it every Sunday; it is just the same with the gentlefolks, only they are a little more careful in taking hold of each other, and wear gloves."

"Faith, there will be a pretty deal of dust in his clothes to-morrow," said Karl.

"It is a dusty amusement," assented the giant. "It consists in twirling round and jumping, first on one side, then on the other. One tries to lift oneself from the ground, which is always impossible; one gets hot, drinks one glass or more, and ends with a kissing polonaise

When anybody wishes to marry it is indispensable, but you will not come to that for many a year."

"But neither is Herr Wohlfart come to that point," answered Karl. "It would be a pretty business if he were to marry a young lady, with a pair of grey horses and smart plated harness."

"Yes, indeed it will be inevitable," said the father, shaking his head; "it always begins with dancing and ends with a wedding. It was so with me."

"I should have liked to have seen you," exclaimed Karl.

"By Jove!" cried out the giant, "didn't I dance well in my younger days! Common waltzes, hop waltzes, and Russian waltzes; and as to the grandfather's dance, I had not my match."

Karl looked at his father doubtfully. "Indeed," continued the father, pleased with his recollections, "when the floor is firm, and one is surrounded with comrades, I like the work well enough. There was a great ball given by the citizens; I was invited with Billy, who was then only a stripling, and it seems to me as if it was only yesterday. I wore a blue coat with brass buttons, and was standing in the middle of the room looking at the company whirling around me, when my eyes fell upon your mother, a pretty little creature like a doll. She was sitting with her father by her side, who was a locksmith. 'Good evening, Hans!' he shouted to me; 'so you are here too.'

"I should think so, indeed, gossip," I said, and drew near them, and the more I looked at the doll, the more I liked her. 'This is my daughter,' said the locksmith; 'you will not recognize the lass, she has been two years in the country with her aunt.' 'How pretty she has grown!' I said; 'she is so plump and neat, and looks as if she had been turned in a lathe.' The little thing blushed, and I coloured too. 'Well,' said the locksmith, 'if you wish to dance with her, go, but don't grasp her too tight.' 'Very gently,' I said, and led her to the dance. I suppose we looked a great contrast, the bright-eyed little maiden and I, and I believe the people laughed."

"You ought not to have borne that," cried out Karl, who had seated himself in front of his father, with his arms crossed.

"They meant no harm," said the old man; "and your mother assured me that after the first turn she did not mind the laughing of the people. Indeed, she said I was a good dancer. Of course, I danced with her the whole evening, and at the last dance I got into a quarrel with Billy; for when he saw I was dancing with her, he wanted to do so also; and when he discovered that I was paying court to her, and fluttered about her, and passed my fingers through my hair, and went out to buy a nosegay for her from the flower-girl, and one for myself, he, too, went out and bought two nosegays, and began to flutter about her like a finch, till at last I took him aside, and said, 'Look you, Billy, with every waggon, barrel, and bale you shall have your turn where I have mine, but here, with the locksmith's daughter, you had better keep out of the way.' 'Why?' he asked. 'Why,' said I, 'because we are friends, Billy, and I should not like to give you a blow or thrash you before all these people.' 'Do you know,' said he, 'you are a sly fox!' Then I found what was the matter with me; from that day I was in love. You will some day learn what that is. It makes one uneasy, puts one out of order, throws one into passions, and one begins to sing and write letters, and buys oneself a new coat. So every one

does, and so did I, too. In six weeks our wedding took place. Your grandfather insisted upon all the packers being asked; and that evening we packers danced the ninepins dance, and I was the first ninepin. The house shook, to be sure, but no mischief happened, except that the chandelier was broken."

"Odds-bobs!" exclaimed Karl, "I should have liked to have seen it! What a pity I was not there!"

"You impudent pigmy," said his father, "how could you be there? You were not thought of then."

"I hope Wohlfart will not come home too late; Herr Schroeter does not like that," said Karl.

In the meanwhile the servant threw open the folding-doors of Frau von Baldereck's apartments, and Fink and Anthony entered a suite of lighted rooms, in which a great many elegant ladies and gentlemen were drinking tea and fluttering about. The mothers and relatives of the young ladies had been invited to attend the opening of the dancing lessons. Fink whispered in his friend's ear, "Be as impudent as you can, it is all nonsense," and led his unresisting victim up to the lady of the house.

Anthony was graciously received, made his bow, and was so nervous that he did not perceive that the looks of the company were directed towards him with the most impertinent curiosity.

"I will introduce you to Countess Pontax," said his kind patroness, and led her trembling *protégé* up to a lady of indefinite age, who was enthroned on a raised seat, surrounded by ladies and gentlemen. "Dear Betty, here is Herr Wohlfart." Notwithstanding his embarrassment, Anthony could see that "Dear Betty" had a long, shrivelled nose, thin lips, and a hard, repulsive countenance; he felt that two piercing eyes were fixed upon his face, and he bowed his head, partly in salutation, and partly with the resignation of a captive. The countess sat as stiff as a poker while she received his bow, and said, from her throne, with a tone of indifference, "You are a friend of Herr von Fink's?"

"At your command, countess," answered Anthony.

"You have not been living here long?"

All conversation around them had ceased, and more than twenty eyes seemed to pierce poor Anthony.

"Already some years," he replied.

"You are a stranger, are you not?" continued Betty.

"I was born and brought up in this province," answered Anthony.

"Indeed," came coldly from the lips of the lady, "and from what place?"

"From Ostrau," said he, raising his head quickly. The cross-examination vexed him, he knew not why, and shyness gave place to anger.

"My friend has half Slavonian blood in his veins, proud lady," said Fink, interposing at the right moment, "though he protests vehemently against it when his German origin is in question, and soon he promises to become a very good Englishman; now he shares in my wish to find favour in your eyes. I recommend him to your protection. You have just given us a proof of your knowledge of

human nature, pray grant to my friend what we all admire so much in you, that kind indulgence to the imperfections of others."

The ladies laughed, and some of the gentlemen turned away to conceal their smiles, and Betty sat with ruffled feathers, like a bird of prey, from whom a stronger one has snatched its booty.

Anthony hastened to escape from this circle. He glided into a corner of the room, and hoped, whilst quietly observing the society, to recover from the fatigues of his presentation. Suddenly his arm was lightly tapped by a cambric handkerchief, and a girl's voice asked, "Herr Wohlfart, do you not know your old friend?" It is the second time I have been obliged to speak first."

Anthony turned quickly round. Before him stood a tall, slender girl, with fair hair and large deep-blue eyes, who looked smiling in his face. The expression of delight upon Anthony's countenance was so legible, that Leonora could not refrain from giving him a friendly nod, and saying, "I rejoice to see you; the gentlemen around are all strangers to me; but how do you come here?"

Anthony explained as well as he could, but was in such a state of mind that he could hardly command his words, bewildered by the sight of the fair creature who, without knowing it, had for years ruled over him even in his garret. How tall she had grown! how beautiful she had become! And that airy white dress! and the wreath of flowers in her hair! How brightly her eyes shone! and how queenlike her manner!

They were soon in eager conversation; it was only the third time they had met, but they had as much to say to each other as if they had lived for years together.

"To-day our dancing will be very irregular, and we shall not attend much to our dancing-master," said the young lady at last. "I prefer it so. But you must not continue to talk to me alone, you should speak to some of the other ladies. I must go to my mother. When the music begins come to me and I will introduce you to my mother."

So saying, she nodded to him graciously, and walked majestically through the room to join a circle of ladies.

Anthony was now armed against all the terrors of society; his shyness had vanished, and his mind felt quite buoyant. What did he care for all these gaily-dressed beings that flitted about him! They were as indifferent to him as a flight of birds or the flowers in the meadows. He went immediately in search of Fink, and desired to be introduced to several gentlemen, and then insisted upon his presenting him to some of the young ladies.

"Have you taken any notice of the young lady of the house?" inquired Fink.

"No," answered Anthony.

"Do it without loss of time," said Fink, "or you may be sure you'll suffer for it."

"It is quite indifferent to me," whispered Anthony to his friend, as he took him up to Fraulein Eugenie.

The young lady was as cold to Anthony as might be expected after having been so long neglected. With some difficulty he extracted a few short answers from her, and was not sorry she turned her back upon him to speak to Lieutenant von Zernitz, who at that moment approached.



This repulse was quite a matter of indifference to him. Near him was Frau von Baldereck, who, with that indefinable sixth sense which bats are said to possess in such an extraordinary degree, was occupied in watching the company with one eye, while her other was fixed upon her daughter and Fink; Anthony immediately turned to her and begged her to introduce him to a lady dressed in pink, with silver wheat-ears in her brown hair.

"Do you mean the Countess Lara," inquired the lady of the house.

Anthony bowed in the affirmative, but whether it was Lara, Tara, or any other name, he did not care. The countess looked at him surprised, but he talked with such agreeable vivacity about the pleasure of the dancing-lessons, the charming decorations of the drawing-room, the taste with which in general drawing-rooms were now fitted up, and about the new winter garden at Paris, which he had read about in the newspapers the night before; he described to her the fountains and glass cupolas, and gilded balustrades, the artificial rocks with tropical plants on them, and little salamanders gliding among them to the great delight of the public; and said all this with such animation, that the little lady in pink gradually thawed; and when he came to the lizards she became talkative in her turn, and told him of two salamanders she had once seen sitting on a stone, and of the alarm they had excited in her. If she had told him that they were sitting with their legs crossed, drinking beer out of a tannard, it would only have appeared to him a daily occurrence, quite in the ordinary course of nature. Having concluded the subject of the salamander, Anthony was just beginning to speak of a great exhibition of pumpkins which had been in the town some weeks before, when the music struck up, the pink dress and silver wheat-ears vanished from before Anthony's eyes, he turned sharp round, and left the astonished lady without concluding his sentence.

The queen of his heart was standing there talking to her mother. His courage fell as he approached the baroness; there were the same delicate features, the same distinguished air, which had so struck him once before. Years had not diminished the beauty of the baroness, and the proximity in which Anthony now beheld her, increased the fascination which her appearance exercised over him. She was too much a woman of the world not to see at a glance that Anthony was a novice in society, if it was only from a superabundance of respect with which he approached her.

"This is Herr Wohlfart," said Leonora, "about whom you once scolded me. I can assure," she added, addressing him, "the first day that I saw you, mamma scolded me for detaining you so long in our garden."

"That distresses me very much," replied Anthony with emotion. "Indeed, madam, you cannot imagine how happy I was made by the sympathy of the young lady, just when I was going among strangers to embark on an uncertain future. Her kind words gave me courage, and have often come back to my memory as a bright augury of happiness to come."

"How touchingly you say that?" exclaimed Leonora, fixing her eyes on him.

The baroness listened with astonishment to Anthony's burst of eloquence, and regarded the romantic youth with a curiosity that

was not without a touch of uneasiness; but Leonora interrupted the conversation with her mother, by saying impatiently, "We must go; they are standing up for the dance." Anthony took her hand with the tips of his fingers, and led her into the circle of dancers.

"He waltzes passably, rather like a bourgeoisie, but his bearing is not bad," muttered Fink.

"A distinguished couple," exclaimed Frau von Baldereck, who was near the Baroness Rothsattel, as Anthony and Leonora waltzed by.

"She talks to him too much," the baroness said to her husband, who at this moment approached her.

"To him?" asked the baron, "who is the young man? I do not remember to have seen his face before."

"He is one of Herr von Fink's *protégés*; he is of no family, is said to have rich relations in America or Russia. I am not pleased with this commencement for Leonora."

"Well," answered the baron, "he appears to be a nice young lad; for this childish amusement, such a youth is a better partner, at all events, than those *blasé* old boys I see there. The younger ones amuse themselves and their partners, while such as Benna Toennchen can only amuse themselves by making the girls blush, or rather by making them forget to blush. Leonora is looking very pretty. I am going to my whist, let me be called when you order the carriage."

Anthony heard nothing of what was said about him and his partner, neither would he have done so, had the voices of the company around him been as loud as the great clock of the highest church steeple in the town. The globe had become very small in his eyes, not larger than the small spot on which he and his partner moved; all beyond it was darkness, desolation, nothing; all his senses were enchained to that which his arm encircled. That beautiful fair hair, so near his face that the curls nearly touched him; her warm breath fanning his cheek, the indescribable charm of the white glove covering her soft hand, the perfume of her handkerchief, the red flowers in front of her dress—all this he felt and saw, and nothing else. When she hung upon his arm, and looked brightly upon him during the dance, when she stopped breathless and slowly loosened herself from him, or arranged her bracelet, or held her perfumed handkerchief for a moment to her nose—how lovely were all her movements! how enchanting the sweet greeting of her eyes, and her gentle smile when Anthony said something that pleased her!

And he had the good fortune to please her; she told him that he talked most agreeably, and that it was a pleasure to her to listen to him. But indeed it was not what he said; it would have been much the same if he had talked of the New Zealanders, or the Emperor of Japan; it was the way in which he said it, the quiet homage of his eyes, the tremor of his voice, that flattered her and found an entrance to her heart.

The music ceased, the globe became again a dark chaos. "What a pity!" said Leonora, as the last notes died away.

"I thank you for this happiness," said Anthony, as he led the young lady back to her seat.

Soon after, while wandering about among the guests, who were all strangers to him, like a rudderless vessel in the midst of roaring

waves, Fink came up to him and said, "By Jove, you young hypocrite, you have either been drinking sweet wine, or you are a secret Don Juan. How the deuce did you know the Rothsattel? you have never told me of this acquaintance. She has a fine figure, and a classical head, has she got any wits?"

Anthony felt at this moment inclined to tell his friend, that he had the greatest contempt for him; for such a coarse way of speaking could only come from a low nature.

"Wits?" answered Anthony, giving Fink a look of deadly enmity; "whoever doubts it must have got very little himself."

"Come, come," said Fink, surprised, "I am not in that deplorable situation. I think the girl, or to speak more suitably, the young lady, very captivating—indeed, to tell the truth, uncommonly charming; and if I had not views elsewhere I do not know whether I should not feel inclined to declare her the mistress of my heart, but as it is I can of course only admire her at a distance."

Fink was not after all so bad as he appeared; to be sure he was not always very select in his expressions, but in the main he had right feelings, and a true heart. Anthony laid hold of his arm, pressed it warmly, and said, "You are right."

"Truly," continued Fink, in his usual manner, "you begin well. I would rather sit on a powder barrel with a piece of burning sulphur, than affront you with all your timidity. But mind you, don't forget to ask Fraulein Eugenie for the next dance; you'll be refused, as she is already engaged; you have conducted yourself very well hitherto—go on as you have begun, my son."

And Anthony did continue to do honour to his master; he was indeed intoxicated, but with a stronger drink than sweet wine. The music, the excitement of the dance, and the gay buzzing flutter about him, raised his spirits. He felt perfect confidence in himself the whole evening, almost bold, and setting aside some trifling blunders, behaved like one who has been accustomed all his life to wax candles, and servants waiting on him. He was taken notice of, and excited some curiosity as a stranger. Dark hints about his mysterious connexions flew from one corner of the room to another. There could be no doubt that this calm and natural indifference must be the result of conscious self-respect. He was treated with great civility by the elderly ladies and by some of the gentlemen.

At last the time for the cotillon arrived. Oh, thou longest and most wonderful of all dances, half-play and half-dance! charming to the couples who are whirling about, and still more so to those to whom it gives time to talk a little unobserved; we are told that thou art considered obselete and vulgar in the present day. Oh fickle age! neither science nor politics will discover anything new, which will satisfy so many of the wants of mankind as thou. Take first, the childish mind, it can form for itself a pyramid, meander about in serpentine windings, run here and there to fetch old gentlemen from the card-table to take an extra turn; it can, seated on a chair, contemptuously allow three or four young ladies to be marched up and stand before it; it can jump up suddenly seized with a dancing frenzy, and lay hold of any young lady and dance round with her, and no one can hinder it. Then there are minds with higher aspirations, who have feelings of ambition, malice, or misanthropy—to all these also

thou givest pleasure ; thou givest every gentleman the right to dance more than once with the lady of his heart ; thou allowest every lady to give a delicate hint to the gentlemen who have the highest place in her favour ; thou distributest ribbons and decorations to aspiring cavaliers, and bindest manifold nosegays to the bosom of the lady of the evening ; but also, thou sendest rejected gentlemen rushing about gnashing their teeth in search of a substitute ; thou showest which are the favourites of society, but leavest the unknown and unpopular still more lonely and neglected. When thou beginnest, mothers begin to look anxious, and the faces of aunts lengthen. Oh childish, merry, endless dance ! how many hast thou made happy, how many secret tears hast thou caused, how many marriages settled, how many pangs of jealousy aroused ! Thou hast indeed also stirred up an endless dust, worn out innumerable toilets, and occasioned many fierce enmities. Such thou wast in thy season of bloom, the delight of youth, the great business affair of mothers, the terror of sleepy fathers, the aversion only of the musicians.

When this many-phased dance was going to begin, Anthony contrived to get near Leonora, and asked her to dance with him.

"I knew you would ask me," she said frankly. He then fetched a chair, placed himself next her, and was happy ; and when it became his duty to take a turn with another lady, and present her with something out of the basket which was placed in the centre of the circle, he showed indisputably to all the world that he had no room in his heart for any other by waiting, when he had fetched the present from the basket, till his partner returned to her place, and giving the red bow to her. This was for both the happiest moment of the evening.

All that followed was to him only a vague dream. He saw himself sauntering about the room arm-in-arm with Fink ; he heard himself talking and laughing with him and other gentlemen ; he was aware that he made a bow, and muttered thanks to the lady of the house ; and it seemed to him that a servant handed him his greatcoat, upon which he thrust his hand into his pocket, and put something into the man's hand ; but all these circumstances were shadowy and indistinct. Only one thing he saw clearly—a certain white lady's cloak, with a silk hood and a tassel. Oh, this tassel, how exquisite it was ! Once more a glance of those full bright eyes was cast on him, and he heard a gentle whisper from her lips, like "good-night." And again all was as an insignificant dream—how he descended the stairs with his friend, and only half listened to his fun ; how he arrived in his small room, lighted the lamp, and looked about to see whether it was really his abode ; how he undressed slowly ; how, when in his bed, he still kept wondering whether it was all a reality, and, tired, at last fell asleep. And then he did indeed dream that his household spirit, the yellow cat, rose up on her pedestal, and shook her head at the long procession of images and feelings which had intruded into that peaceful abode.

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## CHAPTER XI.

AFTER that grand evening, the dancing-lessons took their regular course. Anthony having passed through the ordeal of the first introduction, soon began to feel himself at home amongst the gauze dresses, the embroidered cushions, and the distinguished company. He became a useful member of the society, and that because he possessed the most citizen-like of all virtues, punctuality and conscientiousness. These dances were no common dancing-lessons, for all were expected to understand the rudiments of the art; the object was to practise new dances, and to enable families to meet without formality. Now this easy style of society was quite to Fink's taste, but in the study of new dances he and many of his companions were guilty of great remissness. Often he did not come till the dancing was nearly over, and seemed to consider these parties merely as an opportunity of teasing the young ladies, and passing half-an-hour in chat with the riper beauties; to the horror of the dancing-master, he maintained that the common galloppe was quite sufficient, and that the only pleasure of dancing was to go regularly out of time. "But Herr von Fink," remonstrated the dancing-master, "that cannot be called dancing; there is no art shown in it."

"There ought to be none," said Fink; "what has our dancing to do with art? What you teach the young people is merely a sociable rotation round an imaginary centre; that is a bore to me—I like the eccentric course of a comet." And he acted up to this, and compelled the unhappy victims to whom he was kind enough to engage himself to rush across the line of dancers from one end of the room to the other, out of all time, just as it pleased his fancy.

In opposition to this eccentric notion, which, unhappily, had many partisans in the society, Wohlfart exhibited all the regularity of one who delights in doing his duty; he always appeared at the right time, did every step, danced every dance, was always in good humour, and took pleasure in asking neglected young ladies to dance. In consequence of the carelessness of Fink and his companions, there was soon found to be a scarcity of gentlemen, and the unassuming Anthony became in a short time the prime assistant of the society, the favourite of the dancing-master, and confidant of the young ladies. How happy he was in these hours! The pleasure that lighted up his countenance attracted the observation of the ladies, young as well as old. The former were confirmed in their impression that he was an amiable youth, and the latter in their conviction that he was a prince in disguise. He alone knew why he was so happy; all his thoughts and actions had reference to her, the undisputed queen of his heart. All the dances and conversations he had with other young ladies he looked upon as mere social flourishes, which he drew with the pen of his heart round that one name; and his devotion was not unnoticed. She treated him like an old friend amongst strangers, asked him in a whisper to be her partner for particular dances, and even once asked him to resign his rights in favour of a newly-arrived cousin of hers; and she was not a little pleased to see that this was a great disappointment to Anthony, who asked no other lady, but looked silently at the dance. He never left the dancing-room till she went, and stood

near the door to receive her last commissions and greeting, and to catch a glance from her bright eyes. She also surveyed anxiously the crowd of black-coated gentlemen, as soon as she entered the room, until she recognized him, and it was only then she felt at home in the brilliantly-lighted apartment.

Anthony also entered into friendly relations with several of the gentlemen to whom Fink introduced him at Feroni's. There was much, indeed, in his new friends that displeased him; their ideas were coarser than he liked, and he suspected that several of them had been brought up very badly. Still, there was something about them which excited his respect; above all, a certain chivalrous atmosphere which seemed to surround them, a mixture of the drawing-room, the stable, and the club. Anthony's artless disposition, his close intimacy with the mighty Fink, and the quick determination with which he asserted a will of his own, sometimes protesting against another bottle, or zealously defending the absent ladies from impertinent criticisms, gained him the regard of the other gentlemen, amongst whom he got the name of a good fellow.

Before many weeks had passed, circumstances occurred which placed Anthony's beloved partner in a situation which excited in him the deepest sympathy. It might naturally be supposed that the young ladies of the society would be of one heart and soul, nevertheless, it soon became evident that such was not the case; so factions arose, and they formed themselves into two large confederations—a few flitted between, but in general the separate factions kept close together, and nourished the most violent antipathies against each other. Things went so far, that at last one evening, all the ladies of one party appeared with a white camelia in the middle of their nosegay, which was fastened by a brown ribbon with long hanging ends; and the natural consequence was that the opposite party appeared the following evening with a red camelia in their bouquets, and green ribbons. Leonora was at the head of the brown party, and Eugenie, the young lady of the house, at the head of the green. In confidence it may be told that the greens were insupportable. There was so much pretension about them, they were so satirical, and gave themselves airs as if they were much older than the browns. The ground of these pretensions was, that Hulda Werner and Mechthild Fiorelli had been at the court balls the preceding winter, and Fanny Mareschalk had taken the part of Genevieve in a *tableau vivant*. Theone Lara and charming Hildegard Salt belonged to the browns: they were intimate friends, always walked arm-in-arm, dressed alike, and in the beginning of the winter had taken an oath never to part; an oath against the fulfilment of which only one obstacle existed—their parents lived in the summer in two opposite corners of the province. They were both enthusiastic characters, who shared each other's feelings; both sang, both played on the piano; both were fond of the same poets, and had an invincible aversion to gentlemen with tufts on their chins; they sat together like a pair of lovebirds, whispering into each other's ears the feelings excited in them by the conduct of some of the gentlemen, or by the melancholy prelude to some waltz. These two were soon closely bound with Leonora Rothsattel; they, together with Valeska Panin and Hortense Leloup formed the nucleus of the brown faction. Leonora's stately figure towered above all her

party, as the figure of a commander may be distinguished from his soldiers. When a dance was over, the browns collected together, and when they were vis-a-vis in a quadrille, they always raised their nose-gays as a kind of greeting.

Of course Anthony was brown—brown from head to foot, and when he, one evening, openly manifested his sentiments by wearing a brown and white striped waistcoat, all the ladies of that colour selected him in the cotillon, a circumstance which created great excitement, even amongst the chaperons at the other end of the room. The voracious historian regrets that he is obliged to state, that Fink enrolled himself among the greens, not unconditionally, however, for he treated his green partners, as the brown asserted, rather cavalierly; but as Eugenie Baldereck laid especial claim to his services, he could not, as Anthony said, to excuse his friend, possibly do otherwise. It was now the incident we have alluded to took place.

Theone Lara kept a diary in which she registered her feelings. It contained the tale of the two salamanders already mentioned, and everything that had ever agitated her heart, her views on nature, men, and the dancing parties. It was her greatest treasure. In a heavenly hour she had initiated Hildegard Salt into the secrets of this book; they had kissed, and shed tears, and sworn an eternal friendship over it. From that time they had kept the diary in common. All their deepest feelings, their most secret observations, were inscribed there. One evening, when Leonora had been particularly amiable to them, they opened their hearts to her, and showed her some pages of the diary, and afterwards she had been indulged with the favour of writing something in it; but as her forte did not lie in committing her sentiments to paper, but rather in drawing faces and ridiculous figures, she had enriched it with several caricatures, and Hildegard, who had a poetical vein, had composed some verses for each drawing. No stranger was allowed to look into this precious book, no one must see or touch this sanctuary. Day and night she carried it about with her. By night it lay under her pillow, and while her maid dressed her she slipped it secretly under her corsets and wore it against her innocent heart; it was a small thin book bound in red silk. When Hildegard looked at her tenderly, or Leonora patted her arm with her nosegay, she pointed secretly to her heart. That evening she had put the book in its usual place, and during the first dance had distinctly felt it, after the quadrille it was gone.

It was gone—she had it no longer—it must have slipped down on the floor. How such a thing was possible remains, to this day, a dark riddle to herself and all concerned. She was near fainting; and had scarcely strength to draw Hildegard aside to impart to her the dreadful loss. Hildegard called Leonora, and the three stood as if petrified. The sanctuary of the covenant was lost, it had fallen into the hands of strangers; yes, terrible thought, perhaps into the hands of the greens. The last pages were filled with quizzing remarks; all the gentlemen were passed in review, though certainly with funny names, Fink was called greenfinch; Toennchen, nuthatch; but who would answer for their not finding the key of these ciphers? and what would happen then? It was destruction! the ruin of the dancing lessons; family discord, the dissolution of every human tie. Theone sat in

despair; for one moment she thought of poison, then of flight, far away from all countries where people dance. Leonora regained her composure first. "Let us look for it," she said, laying hold of Hildeward's arm; "perhaps it is lying somewhere in the room; I will search for it under the feet of the gentlemen, you may look under the seats of the ladies."

Thus they walked together about the room, as if for their amusement, with despair in their hearts, apparently chattering, but inwardly weeping. Occasionally some tiresome gentleman accosted them, when they were obliged to stop and answer with unconcern, while their hearts were distracted with terror lest another should find their treasure. They came to the group of greens, where it was necessary for them to stop, and laugh and talk in a friendly way; they approached Eugenie Baldereck, who asked whether it would not be advisable to have another dance, while they could not but remember that the book contained a likeness not to be mistaken, with this inscription—"Pert, unfeeling, and forward E—B—," they came near Fink—alas! alas! of him there was a ludicrous picture sitting with Herr von Toennchen on a vine, with this motto:—

"A greenfinch, who rejoiced in the strength of his bill,  
 Along with a nuthatch sat drinking his fill.  
 'My beak's sharp and biting,' the proud greenfinch sings;  
 'My mind's green and vigorous, just like my wings.'  
 The nuthatch says, sighing, 'My senses are dull,  
 And I don't understand you, so thick is my skull.'"

Thus they strolled twice through the room; they did not venture upon a third time, though they had found nothing. Downcast, they returned to Theone.

"There is only one way," exclaimed Leonora. "Where is Herr Wohlfart?"

Hildegard held her back. "You wouldn't tell a gentleman!"

"I'll answer for him," said Leonora proudly; "he is trustworthy. Where is he?"

"There, talking to Frau von Baldereck."

The two seekers passed slowly by Anthony. His back was turned to them; but as they approached, he felt an irresistible inclination to look at the music. He turned round—Leonora stood before him. She gave him a significant glance; he broke off his conversation with Frau von Baldereck, and was at her disposal.

"Herr Wohlfart, a little book, bound in red silk, has been lost in the room by Theone Lara. It is of great value to us. Pray try and recover it."

"Is it a printed book?"

"No; it is in manuscript. Not even you can be allowed to look into it—it contains our secrets. Swear that you will not open it if you find it."

"I swear!" Anthony replied solemnly.

"Thank you. Pray be cautious."

Anthony hurried into the crowd, and passed the next quarter of an hour in seeking for it. There was nothing on the floor, nothing on the seats; none of the servants had found it—the book had vanished. With the deepest sympathy he reported his unsuccess to the ladies.



A fresh dance commenced. Theone's head ached so that she could not rise; the innermost shrine of her heart was opened, all her feelings laid bare, all her secrets exposed to the eyes of the rude world! Leonora felt the misfortune more in a party point of view—the browns were in danger of suffering a blow from which they could never recover. And yet they must dance. It was like dancing on a volcano—the ground was burning lava—at every instant an explosion might take place! The longer the allies thought over their misfortune, the more terrible the prospect seemed, for every moment brought to their recollection some fresh iniquity in the diary.

When the dance was over, as Fink was passing before Hildegard, he tapped with his foot on the floor, and, turning towards her, said, "This floor sounds very hollow. I don't understand the meaning of it; perhaps there is some lost treasure under our feet."

Hildegard rushed to Leonora and the fainting love-bird, and exclaimed, quite beside herself, "Herr von Fink knows about it!" The brown ribbons collected in a corner, laid their heads together, and held a council. At last it was decided that Fink's words were very alarming, but did not make the misfortune certain.

But this doubt soon vanished, for Fink's behaviour became very remarkable. He neglected his own party, sought out the browns, sat down by Theone, who had already gone through horrors great as those of Juliet's dying scene and the ruin of the Capulet family, and could no longer restrain her tears. He entered into conversation with her, forced her to answer him, pitied her pale looks, and complained of the warmth of the room. He tormented her till she almost fainted, and finished his malicious revenge by directing her attention to Hulda Werner, and asking, "How do you like that green dress? Does she not look like a greenfinch?" His next victim was Leonora. She was standing in the midst of her allies, with all the dignity of a queen, but a dethroned one. In the presence of all her adherents, Fink addressed her. She was more civil to him than she had ever been in her life, and tore her pocket-handkerchief in her endeavours to bear his quizzing with composure. All went on well till he suddenly called out, in the middle of the conversation, to Herr von Toennchen, who was passing by, "Benno, are you fond of cracking nuts?"

Benno Toennchen, who was a green, answered with surprise, "No; if Fraulein Leonora has given us one to crack, I fear it will be too hard for me."

There could be no doubt now that Fink had the book. The brown ribbons first dispersed, and then reassembled, like a flight of frightened chickens over which a hawk is hovering. Leonora alone was collected, and stepped up to Fink resolutely, "You have a book, Herr von Fink, that one of my friends has lost, and is very unhappy about. Its contents are not intended for strangers, and it might occasion great annoyance in this society. I beg that you will return the book to me."

"A book?" inquired Fink, with an expression of curiosity; "what kind of book?"

"Don't pretend ignorance?" she said; "it is clear to all of us that you have got it; and I cannot believe that, after what I have told you, you could keep it another instant."

"But I can keep it," said Fink, with a nod; "you are too kind in expecting such delicacy from me."

"That would be more than rude!" exclaimed Leonora.

"It would give me the greatest pleasure to be more than rude if I had the book. A book which belongs to you or one of your friends—which possibly contains your handwriting, or some other remembrance of you—I would not return, even if I found it; and if I learn where it is, I shall steal it; and if I do obtain it, I shall learn every line of it by heart, and will endeavour to please you by reciting passages out of it as often as I have the pleasure of seeing you."

Leonora drew a few steps nearer, and her eyes flashed. "If you do, Herr von Fink," she exclaimed, "you will act most unworthily."

Fink gave her a friendly nod. "You are charming in your passion, Fraulein, but how can you expect a jolly bird like me to be serious? Nature has distributed her gifts diversely; on some she bestows the gift of poetry, others draw little pictures, and she has given me a pointed beak, of which I make use. Did you ever see a dignified greenfinch?" He turned away laughing, took Benno Toennchen's arm, and walked with him towards the door.

Leonora hastened to Anthony. "Herr von Fink has the book. I entreat of you to get it back; he has refused to give it to me. He must not read any more of it; it would be the death of Theone!"

Anthony hastily seized his paletot, and ran after his friend, who was already in the street. "To Feroni's, Anthony," called out Fink, still holding the arm of Benno Toennchen.

"I have something to say to you in confidence," said Anthony, going to his other side.

"Not now, brown ambassador!" exclaimed Fink; "I will have nothing to say to you."

"I entreat of you, Fritz," said Anthony, imploringly and catching hold of him, "give me the book!—the girls are dying of fright."

"Let them!" said Fink.

"None of them will close an eye to-night!" exclaimed Anthony.

"So much the better. Nor will we. Let them come to Feroni's, one and all, if they are too much alarmed to stay at home. We will remain together till morning, and you, Anthony, shall not steal away home without me, but stay on in anguish of soul."

"What is this affair of the book?" inquired Toennchen.

"Don't speak of it," begged Anthony, in a low voice.

"Silly nonsense," answered Fink, "you shall know all."

"For God's sake be quiet," again entreated Anthony.

"I shall act according to your conduct," said Fink; "if you run away, I shall read the whole book to the others."

Thus they reached Feroni's. Anthony debated in his own mind whether he should fall upon Fink, and tear the book from him by force; but the result would be uncertain. Entreaties would be of no avail to-night; cunning alone could help him. Whilst he was thinking it over, the others made themselves comfortable in the small back room, their usual drinking place. There were, besides Anthony and Fink, Zernitz and Toennchen, little Lauzan, a Werner, a cousin Baldereck (a young man with goggle eyes, who was spoken of in the book under the name of Green Frog), and two Tronkas.

"What shall we drink?" asked Fink.

"Each his own bottle," answered Zernitz.

"You be hanged!" cried out Fink.

"Anything but your terrible white Burgundy," exclaimed Guido Tronka. "My veins are still swelled like ropes from our last sitting." "Then sack and port wine, an honest half-and-half," proposed Fink.

"Superbos!" cried out the little Lauzan.

"Why, that is devil's drink," complained Zernitz.

"Waiter!" called out the gentlemen, and the order was given.

Meanwhile Anthony hit upon a desperate expedient. He went out and gave the waiter a thaler to overheat the stove of the small back room, and to keep continually throwing fresh fuel upon it, without heeding the complaints of the gentlemen. He himself sat down as far as possible from the stove, and saw, to his delight, that Fink had placed himself close to it. He trusted that the heat would soon become so uncomfortable, that Fink would take off his coat, as he was wont to do in such cases, and thus enable him to get possession of the book.

"I take the liberty to inform you of a great event," began Toennchen. "Have you seen Tronka's Alice yet, Fink?"

"No," said Fink, pouring out a glass; "is it a horse or a woman?"

"A horse, of course," exclaimed Toennchen.

"Bah! leave your stable jacket at home for once," said Fink.

"But it is d——d serious!" cried out Toennchen. "Guido has bet upon the race."

"Pay the money," said Fink to Guido Tronka, "and stay at home. Ajax cannot be beat by any horse in the world."

"Take a look at Alice to-morrow," replied Tronka; "I should like to have your judgment."

"Have you seen the new actress?" said Zernitz to Anthony; "she has brilliant eyes."

"She carries herself magnificently," said the other Tronka to Fink, across the table.

"But she has a hare lip," interposed the green frog, contemptuously.

"Now who is that?" inquired Fink.

"The Seppi, a green-eyed monster," cried out Baldereck. "Do you never go to the opera?"

"No," answered Fink, "but I send my groom there; if you wish for an opinion, apply to him."

The room became very hot. Anthony, wishing to occupy the attention of the party, begged Zernitz to relate a comic story in the provincial dialect, which the lieutenant had told him some days before. He joined heartily in the laugh, and then persuaded the eldest Tronko to tell his adventures with a hare and a woodcock, while he took the ladle and kept filling the glasses.

It became hotter and hotter. The gentlemen moved their chairs from the stove, and called for the waiter.

"It will soon pass off," said Anthony.

"I don't find it so very warm," said Fink, calmly; "on the contrary, you may put more wood on."

But the heat became insupportable; the gentlemen got very angry, and Feroni himself was summoned. Anthony protested against opening the window, as they were too hot from the dancing. Fink declared the temperature to be comfortable, and kept his coat on.

Anthony was in despair. At length he tried a last resource. He

pulled off his own coat, in the hope that his friend would follow his example. Fink did so immediately, and laid his coat carefully on the back of his chair, smiling at Anthony, who watched his movements with the greatest attention.

"The book is not in the coat," said Fink, nodding to him. "Your trouble was in vain; think of something else."

Anthony opened the window. "I shall attempt nothing more," he said, resigned; "you are too cunning for me."

"Bravo," said Fink.

Zernitz made low jokes, Toennchen related lies about dancers, and the little Lauzan got tipsy. At last Fink tapped on the table. "Now listen to me," said he. "I wished to conceal it, but I cannot; it is too much—"

Anthony started up: "I entreat of you, Fritz."

"Peace, oven-heater!" cried out Fink. "Listen, gentlemen. I have to-night found a secret diary of the browns, and have cast my eye over it."

"Hurrah! out with it!" shouted the whole party.

"Of course it contains verses," exclaimed Zernitz.

"There will be fine nonsense in it," said Toennchen; "the fancies and malice of children."

Anthony was furious.

"Of course, it contains nonsense, and the verses appear to me bad," continued Fink. "What have you been doing with the little Lara, Zernitz?"

"Nothing," said the lieutenant, astonished. "I have danced with her sometimes, that is all."

"Indeed!" said Fink, musing. "Poor Theone! I have read a poem that the countess has made on you. Certainly, you are not a bad-looking fellow; but I should not have thought it possible that any one could have spoken of a man so enthusiastically."

"Show it me," entreated Zernitz.

"What, here," exclaimed Fink, reproachfully, "before this wild set? Though you may not fancy the young Lara, who, I thought, looked charming to-night in her distress, you have no right to profane the pure passion of the fair maiden."

"You are right," said Zernitz; "it will be best when we are alone; you will show it to me."

"Certainly," answered Fink. "You know that I hate a petticoat, and if there is anything in the world that makes me shudder, it is a bread-and-butter miss; but truth will out; the girls who have kept the diary are kind-hearted creatures; there is not an ill-natured remark in it."

He then turned to Baldereck: "Your cousin is mentioned in every page with an affection which, I must say, is as well deserved as it is touching. The severest judgment is passed upon me, for they call me a greenfinch."

"According to that, the book must be very tiresome," said Benno Toennchen.

"Yes," answered Fink, "unless you take an interest in what Hildegard Salt says of you."

"It will not be much in my favour," replied Benno, with some curiosity.

"No," said Fink: "she speaks of you in a way which must surprise all your friends. You are called 'grand and calm,' your countenance is a model of manly energy, the poetess finds you full of knowledge, soul, and wit; she inquires whether such a man is not too superior to condescend to a weak girl. Now, I ask all, how can a discreet girl like Hildegard Salt forget herself so far as to nourish a secret flame for you? Though, after the last bottle you become a very amusing companion, yet, if I was a girl, and had to look for an ideal, I would rather make a nuthatch my idol than you."

Toennchen made wry face.

"Is anything said of us?" asked Herr von Werner, also one of the greens, who had four beautiful sisters, neighbours to the Rothsattels, belonging to the new nobility, but rich, and full of family jealousy.

"Very little about you," replied Fink, "only two lines." He took the book from his pocket, opened it, and turned over the leaves. Anthony clenched his fists under the table. "Painful dispensation of Providence; Leonora loves, and seeks in vain to conceal her feelings. And the beloved one belongs to her enemies. Oh, George W., then three notes of admiration." Fink replaced the book. Anthony was quieter; that could not be in the book; besides he saw that the corners of Fink's nose twirled up—an infallible sign that he was jesting.

Zernitz pushed his glass away and said, "It is an indiscretion to talk in this room about the feelings of young ladies."

"I am of your opinion," exclaimed Toennchen.

"So am I," added George Werner.

"You must send the book back sealed," said the Frog.

"Oh, you sentimental fools!" exclaimed Fink, in the highest possible good-humour; "because your heads are scratched by soft hands, your hearts become tender. I should have liked to have seen your countenance, if I had read the contrary from the book—ha, ha! and none of you know Shakspeare!"

"Countesses Lara and Hildegard are too delicate to write what your malice would like to have seen," said Zernitz.

"The Rothsattel is proud, to be sure," exclaimed Werner; "but she had no motive for saying anything about me but the truth. I have always taken her for a clever girl, who well deserves some day to become the wife of an honourable young man."

Fink nodded his approval, then taking up the book and raising his eyes to the ceiling, said, "Why am I not transplanted at once from this sinful world, and placed among better creatures? I am a seraph, and no one will believe it—at least the women will not. There, Anthony, take the book! It has been won, not by stove-heat, nor by persuasion, nor yet by force, but, by the free resolve of the dancing gentlemen, it is returned unread."

Anthony seized the book, hastened into Feroni's office, and wrote a note to this effect: "Fink has read some pages, but will be silent about them; no one else has seen a line." He sealed up the book and note in a cover, and, late as it was, sent it by one of Feroni's men to the house of the Countess Lara, with repeated injunctions to the messenger to penetrate in spite of all obstacles into the house, and go even as far as her bedroom, where he had good reason to suppose Theone was sitting with tears streaming down her cheeks.

The carouse continued, till at last the hot room, strong drink, and

a meditative disposition in most of the party, brought the sitting to a close sooner than Fink intended. At last he prepared to depart, woke up the drowsy waiter, and told Anthony to pay the bill. As they were going home, he said to Anthony, "Compose yourself, Tony; of course all I told you of the book was a lie. To speak the truth, all the spite of which a society of turtle-doves is capable was collected together in it."

"I was aware of it," said Anthony; "at the next dancing lesson the gentlemen will pay their court to the ladies finely."

"One or other," replied Fink, "shall marry the love I have bestowed upon him to-night. I mean now to addict myself to match-making."

Anthony was annoyed, and kept silent. "Never mind," continued Fink, complacently, "you too shall give your consent to the matches. Tell me, how do my companions please you?"

"I must confess," said Anthony, "what they say often appears to me very commonplace; but they have an air of confidence and self-respect, which they do not lose even in their familiar intercourse."

"Well," said Fink, "they are a poor set; they are ruined by living in a clique, running about in spurs with their female cousins. They are, on the whole, an example of what one should not be, if one wishes to be a pleasant companion. They are loose without being merry, and their mirth is contemptible; in a few years they will be stale and unfit for everything, like bad wine. That Toennchen is already becoming sour. I have a great mind to show them to you all drunk the next time."

"Don't talk so inconsiderately," entreated Anthony.

"Ah, my poor youth," answered Fink, "open the door, and give me back my purse!"

"You have again to-night paid a large bill," said Anthony. "Don't be so generous, you humiliate the others."

"Never mind that, Anthony," replied Fink; "I make fun of them, so it is fair I should pay for them."

"Then I hope you will never pay for me," said Anthony.

"No," answered Fink, "you shall have the privilege of being your own cashier. I am content that you should carry the key of the house for me, and smoke a cigar in my room while I undress. What o'clock is it?"

"It is about two," returned Anthony, reproachfully.

"Then we are undoubtedly the last. When I came here, the old house could not bear such excesses. The first time that I turned this gigantic key in the early dawn, I was afraid the old walls would come down upon me. Now, they are all accustomed to it, dog, servant, and Principal. I often stay out longer merely to upset the regularity of this awfully formal house."

When Hildegard Salt, after passing a tearful night, was, towards morning, preparing to sleep, she was aroused by a letter from Theone Lara, the first half of which expressed her conviction that this world was no longer a place for her; but which ended in quite an altered tone, inviting Hildegard and Leonora to drink chocolate with her, in order to celebrate the happy restoration of the diary.

In this conference of the browns, there was a lively discussion on the desecration of the book, from its having been exposed to the eyes

of man. It was dreadful that Fink should have looked into it. Wohlfart, too, had had the book in his hands, and it was to be feared that he also might have perused it. Leonora was convinced he had not; but Hildegard maintained in opposition to her that he was a man, and that none of that sex, not even the best, were capable of such discretion. After a long debate, it was determined to put it to the test. "If he has opened it," said Leonora, "he has at least seen the title-page."

"The title-page he might be permitted to see," interposed one of the brown birds.

"I forbade his opening the book," said Leonora, "and I know he has not seen one page. You shall all hear how he will answer my questions."

When Anthony made his appearance at the next dancing lesson, Leonora went to meet him at the head of her party; she wore a sorrowful aspect, and all the browns drooped their heads, in order to appear dejected. "Ah, Herr Wohlfart, what have you done! the book which you sent to Theone, was not her diary, it was the memorandum-book of one of the gentlemen."

"How is it possible?" exclaimed Anthony, astounded.

"On the very first sheet there was a bill for a coat, dated the 29th; a bottle of claret and a pair of new spurs, dated the 30th. That book could be of no use to us." All the browns shook their heads, and cast their eyes down.

Anthony tried to excuse himself, saying, "Fink took the red book out of the pocket of his waistcoat and put it into my hand, and I at once sealed it up and sent it."

"Then Herr von Fink must have changed it," continued Leonora. "Why did you not look into it?" she asked, in a reproachful tone, "at least at the title-page."

"I did not venture," said Anthony; "I had promised you not to look at it. I will call Fink."

"Stop a moment!" exclaimed Leonora. "Has he looked into it or not?" she asked, turning triumphantly to her party.

An admiring "No!" burst from all lips.

"Stay, Herr Wohlfart," resumed Leonora; "it was the right book you sent back; but some of us doubted whether any man, even you, could return it unread: I said you could, and have in this way given my friends evidence of it."

"I thank you for your confidence," said Anthony, delighted.

"I know that you are all that is good and honourable," continued Leonora, giving him a look of the most perfect confidence.

That was a remarkable evening in the society. Before the cotillon Anthony was surrounded by a circle of young ladies, who treated him in the most confidential manner, and when the moment arrived for distributing the red bows to the gentlemen, the front of his coat was so covered with them, that he looked like the most decorated of court-marshals.

But there were still more important results. The greens were in danger of becoming out of fashion. Zernitz, George Werner, and little Lauzan, danced that night only with the browns. Hildegard Salt passed a tedious half-hour with the nuthatch, who treated her with chivalrous civility, indeed was quite sentimental, and placed her

thereby in great perplexity. Leonora suffered not only from the attentions of the green frog, but of George Werner and the little Lauzan, who all at once had come to the conviction that she was not unworthy of their homage. Eugenie herself was this evening delightfully cordial with the browns; she hung on Leonora's arm, and at parting kissed Theone on both cheeks with overpowering affection. Frau von Werner sat down by Baroness Rothsattel, and announced that she intended, some day, soon, to pay her a visit with her daughters; begged leave to introduce her George, and talked incessantly of the pleasure it would be to her children, the next summer, to have formed such an intimacy with Leonora at the dancing lessons. In short, the whole aspect of the society was altered. With the exception of some of the green ladies, who were enraged at the faithlessness of their partners, everybody was overflowing with good-nature and benevolence, the objects of which were the ladies of the brown alliance. They were naturally much puzzled at the alteration in their position, and at the cordiality of Eugenie Baldereck, and the devotion shown by the hostile gentlemen; but, alas! they could not enjoy their good fortune, they felt in their hearts the pangs of conscience, and hovering about them in the distance, they saw the awful figure of Fink, the all-knowing one. By one word he could destroy the inconceivable spell that surrounded them. During the whole evening he kept aloof from all the participators in the diary; it was only at the end of the evening that he approached Leonora, and said, "Is not Fraulein Eugenie charming to-night? I grant you she has no feeling, but this little deficiency may, in the course of years, be quite changed."

Leonora, abashed, looked at him, and at length exclaimed, "Come with me to Theone Lara," and when arrived there, she said to her, "Herr von Fink has a claim to our gratitude; we must all of us beg him to keep the same silence about the book he has hitherto done."

"I will engage to do that," answered Fink, "on one condition. I must have a victim; I must know the name of the lady who has written the verses under a certain vine tree. I must have some one to hate, whom I can occasionally abuse, who shall pay for your carelessness in letting the document which contains your caustic wit fall into my hands. Name her to me, and I willingly promise you never to quote a word of the diary to any other person."

There was a great stir in the group, every one was afraid of becoming the prey of the revengeful Indian. Leonora glanced at Hildegard, who grew pale with fright, and said quickly, "I made the drawing, and dictated the verses underneath to my friend; as you have seen it, I beg your pardon. More I cannot do; and if you are still determined to be revenged on me, I must try to bear your hatred."

"Well," said Fink, smiling, "I will take my revenge, and hate you from this day forth. For the rest, it is gratifying to find, that what is usually the most transitory of all feelings, a young lady's friendship, is capable of inspiring such heroic sacrifices. Ah! Fraulein Hildegard, don't you find Benno Toennchen a most good-natured fellow? His figure is not bad, a little too fat, you will say; but it is that which makes him and his family so interesting."

The last result of this fortunate evening was, that at a conference of the browns, they resolved upon rewarding Anthony in some ex-



traordinary way for his chivalrous services. After long deliberation they agreed that Theone and her friends should work him a splendid purse. Next morning the silk and beads were purchased; Leonora determined to learn to work with a crochet needle in order not to be shut out. The first pocket of the purse was already done, with gold glittering on the brown ground, when events occurred which hindered the completion of it.

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## CHAPTER XII.

It is a sad experience, that the infernal powers do not leave the children of men long undisturbed in the enjoyment of high-strained sentiment. They manage matters so cunningly, that they always leave some inward chord unstrung while they are tuning-up the others, and that of course produces discord. This was the case with Anthony's heart.

The first thing was, that his fellow-clerks continued to criticise the change in Anthony's life. Every degree of astonishment reigned in the different departments of the lower house; but in all it was settled, that since Anthony had frequented the dancing lessons, he had undergone a striking and not advantageous change. In reality the change was not great. It is true he was less with his colleagues in his spare hours than formerly; he spent many evenings out of the house; and when he remained in their company he was more absent, and perhaps less indulgent to the weaknesses of the others. His good sense prevented him from setting himself above his colleagues on account of his sudden successes in society, and from boring them with the recital of his adventures, yet he could not help sometimes making comparisons between their tone and manners, which he perhaps underrated from knowing them so intimately, and those of the drawing-room of the distinguished Frau von Baldereck, which impressed him more from being new to him. His colleagues took his increasing taciturnity for pride, and his frequent absences for unseemly levity; and he, who was formerly the pet of the house, was now very severely judged by all. On his side he considered the cool demeanour of the more moderate among them, and the positive coldness of the others, as unkind treatment; and the consequence was he spent the evenings when he did not go out, almost exclusively with Fink; and after a few weeks they formed an aristocratic coterie in opposition to the other gentlemen.

Anthony was more depressed by this state of things than he himself would confess: he felt it at his desk, in his room, even at the dinner table. His colleagues seldom addressed him: when Jordan wanted any information he did not apply to him but to Bauman; when the cashier came into the front office, at breakfast-time, he no longer went up to Anthony; and though Specht spoke oftener to him than formerly, it did not appear to him any improvement in his situation when he whispered in his ear, "Is it true Herr von Berg has dapple-greys?" or, "Must one wear varnished boots or shoes at Frau von Baldereck's?" The person who treated Anthony most severely was his old protector, Pix. Extreme forbearance had never been the fail-

ing of this gentleman, and upon some ground, that was not very clear, he considered Anthony now as a kind of traitor to the office, the great scales, and solo. It was his custom to celebrate his own birthday as pompously as possible: on that day he asked his most trusty friends, among whom Anthony used to stand in the first rank, to pass the evening in his room, and regaled them, on this occasion only, with wine and cake, which he ordered expressly at the baker's each year of increasing dimensions. His birthday had now come round again; and though Pix had latterly been very brief in his communications with Anthony, the latter fully expected to pass the evening with him, and had on that account refused an invitation from Herr von Zernitz. At an early hour, before the opening of the office, he went to Herr Pix's room to wish him joy. Herr Pix took his congratulations very coolly, and gave him no invitation for the evening. After dinner Anthony met the baker's boy carrying the colossal cake with difficulty up the staircase, and he learnt from Herr Specht that all the colleagues were asked to celebrate the return of the day when Herr Pix had by his appearance filled up a gap in the creation. All, indeed, were asked excepting Anthony and Fink.

Anthony considered this neglect as an incivility, and felt it more deeply than he need have done. Herr Specht had also confided to him that Herr Pix had declared that a young gentleman who lived with lieutenants and frequented Feroni's was no fit company for a respectable merchant.

As he was sitting that evening alone in his room, and heard the merry conversation of his colleagues downstairs, a feeling of sadness and oppression came over him, and none of the brilliant images which had occupied his leisure hours, not even the sweetest of all, had power to dispel the thick cloud of despondency which had gathered over him.

He was not content with himself, and tortured himself with self-accusations: he had become quite a changed being; he had not become idle in his working-hours, but his activity gave him no pleasure, and often seemed a burden to him; he had occasionally forgotten essential things in his letters, and even blundered about prices, and Jordan had returned the letters to him with a short reproof. It occurred to him that the Principal had taken no notice of him lately, and that Sabine, meeting him on the stairs, had greeted him more coolly than usual. The aunt, too, a few days before had complained that her night's rest had been disturbed by somebody opening the house-door so late and with so much noise; upon which all the colleagues had looked at him reproachfully. Even the faithful Karl had asked him ironically before the last dancing-lesson, as Anthony now remembered, whether he had the house-key with him. In this disposition of mind Anthony went to his desk and began to examine his small cash-book. He had not put down his expenses during the last few weeks, and now anxiously took his pen and tried to remember what he had expended, and the amount of the bills he owed, in order to repair his negligence. To his terror he discovered that his debts amounted to a sum which he could not cover without breaking in upon the small inheritance left him by his parents. He felt very unhappy. Sweet notes had long sounded in his ears; Fate had played

the softest melodies on one chord of his heart, but now the others jarred. The discord was to become still greater.

The same evening the merchant came home from the club out of humour; he returned Sabine's greeting very shortly, and paced to and fro in the room with heavy step.

"For God's sake what is the matter?" asked his sister.

Her brother came towards her, and said, "Do you wish to know how Fink has introduced his *protégé* at Frau von Baldereck's? You who were so rejoiced at their friendship! He has spun a web of lies, and has converted the inexperienced Anthony into a reckless adventurer." He then related how an old officer had made inquiries about Anthony, and what had come to light in consequence.

"And is it quite sure that Fink has invented these silly stories, and that Wohlfart has known of them?" inquired Sabine, timidly.

"There is no doubt of Fink's share in them, the trick is so like him. It is the same frivolous, mischievous spirit that respects nothing—not even his friend's reputation."

Sabine leant back in her chair, and assented mechanically. It was too true, and again her heart was excited against him. "Oh, how sad!" she muttered to herself. "But Wohlfart is innocent—of that I feel sure. It is not in his nature to join in such a lie."

"I shall ascertain it to-morrow," said the merchant. "For his own sake I hope you may prove right."

The following morning the Principal passed through the first office, and called Anthony into the small back room. As this happened seldom, Anthony followed with a foreboding that something unpleasant was coming. The Principal closed the door behind him, seated himself in his leather chair, and looking gravely at Anthony, said, in a stern manner, "Dear Wohlfart, I consider it my duty to speak to you of certain rumours that are circulating in the town concerning you. It is supposed that you are a rich young man of mysterious origin, that you have great possessions in America, and that persons in high position take a secret but lively interest in your welfare. I presume that these rumours have reached your ears, and wish to know what steps you have taken to confute them."

Anthony looked amazed, but answered with decision, "I know nothing of such reports: I have sometimes heard from strangers wonderful allusions to my fortune, which I have always contradicted."

"Have you contradicted with sufficient decision?" asked the merchant, sternly.

"I believe so," answered Anthony.

"The idle gossip would be of no consequence," continued the Principal, "if your own character was not endangered by it. The world will be inclined to assume that you have yourself spread these reports; and for a merchant there can be no worse accusation than that he could be capable of obtaining, by unworthy means, a position which he had no right to pretend to."

Anthony stood motionless.

The merchant continued: "Besides, the good name of your parents, also, is attacked by these rumours, for people will have it that you are the illegitimate son of some great man."

"Oh, my mother!" exclaimed Anthony, wringing his hands, while big tears rolled down his cheeks. He was so much agitated that the Principal was obliged to wait till he became calmer, and at last said, soothingly, "Compose yourself, dear Wohlfart, it is your duty to perform the task of proving the falsehood of these stories. You will need calmness and manly firmness for it."

"It is a dreadful thought for me," exclaimed Anthony, still quite beside himself, "that perhaps you also yourself believe that I have propagated these lies, or at least have consented to them in order to make myself of more importance. I beg you to believe that up to this moment I have known nothing of them."

"I am willing to believe you," said the merchant, more kindly, "but you have done much to give rise to such reports. You have been constantly seen in a society which usually treats with great coldness young men in your position. You have occasionally fallen into expenses which are evidently beyond your means, and, at all events, unbecoming to you."

Anthony felt at that moment that he had rather be under the earth than standing on its surface. "Yes," he said at length, despairingly, "you are right. I have done wrong in passing the limits of my station; I have been conscious of it all the time, but especially since I made up my accounts, and found that I was in debt"—here the merchant smiled almost imperceptibly—"it has become quite clear to me that I have been on a wrong path; I was only in doubt how to retrace my steps. Now I shall no longer hesitate," he continued sorrowfully, "and you shall decide whether I act becomingly."

"Was it not Fink who introduced you into the society of Frau von Baldereck? I thought so," said the Principal, smiling. "Perhaps he knows something more of these rumours which disquiet you so much."

"Allow me," replied Anthony, "to call him to bear testimony in your presence that I know nothing of these stories. Fink is my friend, and knows my whole conduct."

"Certainly, if it is any relief to your mind," said the Principal; and Fink was summoned.

When Fink entered the room he was surprised to see Anthony so excited, and without taking much notice of the Principal, asked, "What the deuce have you been crying for?"

"On account of calumnies," said the merchant, gravely, "which affect his character as a man of business and the respectability of his family." Then he related shortly what had passed.

Fink laughed, and exclaimed, "He is quite a child. Why should he mind the idle gossip of the world?"

"He has no right to despise that gossip, as he has given food for it, by his intercourse with the society into which you have introduced him."

"First of all," exclaimed Anthony, "I beg of you to bear witness, in the presence of Herr Schroeter, that I had no knowledge of these stories. You know me well enough to be aware that I never would have set my foot in Frau von Baldereck's house, if I could have imagined that such things would be said of me."

"He is perfectly innocent," said Fink, good-humouredly, to the Principal; "innocent and artless as the violet that blooms quietly in

concealment. If anybody is in fault about this ludicrous story it is me, and also the fools who have spread such nonsense. Be content, Anthony, if the thing annoys you it shall soon be set to rights."

"I will go once more to Frau von Baldereck's, and inform her that I shall cease to attend her dancing soirees."

"I believe that will be the best way," said the merchant.

"I fear it will be of no great use," observed Fink.

"I shall at least have done my duty," said Anthony.

"As you please," answered Fink. "At all events you have learnt how to dance, and how to carry your hat."

That afternoon the merchant said to his sister, "You were right, Wohlfart was, in the main, innocent. Fink, with his usual wantonness, has contrived the whole intrigue."

"I knew it," cried Sabine, continuing to ply her needle assiduously, "For God's sake try, if possible, to prevent any new imprudence."

"They must settle the business themselves," answered the merchant. "I am curious to know how they will manage it."

Anthony worked all day like one who wishes to keep himself from thinking, only spoke when absolutely necessary, and went upstairs to dress himself with the air of a man who has taken his resolution.

Fink watched him suspiciously the whole day, asking himself, "What does the boy intend to do? He behaves as if he was going to fight his first duel." If he could have looked into Anthony's soul, it would have moved even him to have seen the grief that was gnawing at that young heart. It was not alone mortified pride, nor the shame of appearing as an adventurer and impostor, for these feelings were drowned in a greater sorrow—the thought of leaving his beloved partner.

Fink ran upstairs to Anthony's room, he found him already dressed; and when he beheld his friend's pale face looking some years older than usual, he seized his hand, saying, "Are you angry with me?"

"Not with you, or any one else," Anthony answered, with great emotion. "Listen to me. How these reports have arisen I do not wish to know. It is possible that you have made fun of me and others."

"Not with you, my child," said Fink.

"At all events, you have known of the reports, and have not told me, that was not right of you; I tell you so now, and will then forget it. Let us never talk again of this affair."

"Listen," said Fink. "It appears to me that you treat this gossip too seriously."

"Let me act to-day," continued Anthony, "in my own way."

"What will you do, then?"

"Do not inquire; I am perfectly aware of what I ought to do. Let us go."

"Do, then, whatever you like," said Fink, good-naturedly, "but don't forget one thing, that the more agitation you show the more these people will be amused."

"Trust me," said Anthony, "I shall be very calm."

The society had assembled in large numbers in the brilliantly-lighted apartments, as some of the newly-learnt dances were to be shown off. When the friends entered, Fink watched Anthony

anxiously, and remarked that though he seemed troubled yet he walked steadily forward. He left Fink, and immediately went up to Leonora, to whom he was engaged for the first dance. She was looking more lovely than usual, and her large eyes were beaming with delight. She moved some steps to meet him, and said in a gentle tone of reproach, "You come so late, the dance is to begin immediately, and I had hoped to have had a little talk with you before. My father, too, is here: I shall introduce you to him. But what is the matter with you? You look so solemn!"

"Fraulein," replied Anthony, with a bow, "I am in very low spirits to-day, and cannot have the honour of dancing the next dance with you."

"And why not?" inquired the young lady, startled.

"Listen to me, Fraulein. I cannot continue any longer in this society, and only come to-night to make my excuses to you and the lady of the house for leaving it."

"But, Herr Wohlfart!" exclaimed Leonora, clasping her hands.

"I care much more for your good opinion than for that of others," said Anthony, blushing, "and to you I wish to justify myself first."

"But you have nothing to justify; I don't understand you," exclaimed the young lady.

Anthony then told her hastily what he had learnt that day from the Principal, and earnestly assured her that he had never heard any of these reports. "I quite believe you," said Leonora, with confidence; "my father also said that it was probably only idle gossip." She stopped, for she remembered at that moment that her father had added, that Herr Wohlfart might be a very good sort of person, but was not in his place in their society. "And because you have been informed," continued Leonora, "of what people say about you, you think of giving up the dancing-lessons entirely."

"Yes," said Anthony, "for if I remain I shall run the risk of being considered an intruder, or even impostor."

Leonora was hurt, and tossing her head back, said, angrily, "Then go, sir!"

This was the best way to prevent Anthony's going. He stopped and looked imploringly at her.

"Why do you not go?" asked the young lady, still more vehemently.

Anthony grew very pale. He looked with deep anguish into the countenance of the wrathful lady, and said, with trembling voice, "At least tell me that you do not think ill of me."

"I shall not think of you at all," cried Leonora, and turned from him with cutting coldness.

Poor Anthony stood for a moment as if annihilated; it was a bitter sorrow which thrilled through his inexperienced heart. If he had been ten years older he would have taken a more favourable view of this burst of indignation. But now the thought that he had not yet finished his task restored all his energies. He raised his head and walked with a firm step up to the circle, in the midst of which Frau von Baldereck was doing the honours of her house. All the most distinguished ladies of the society were collected there. The tall thin countess was sitting drinking tea, and by Eugenie's mother stood a tall gentleman who, Anthony felt sure, must be Leonora's father. As

he approached the lady of the house to make his bow his eyes passed over the whole society. For many a year after, that moment lived in his recollection ; for many a year, he could remember the colour of each dress, could count the flowers in the nosegay of Baroness Rothsattel, yes, could even recollect the painting of the cup out of which the countess was drinking. The lady of the house received our hero's bow with a gracious smile, and was on the point of saying something amiable to him, when Anthony stopped her, and began his speech in a voice trembling with emotion, but loud enough to fill the whole room, so that after the first words a general silence prevailed. "Madame, I have learnt to-day that reports have been spread in the town that I am rich and have possessions in America, and that persons in high position take a secret interest in me. I declare all this to be false. I am the son of the late auditor Wohlfart of Ostrau. I have inherited little from my parents besides an honourable and spotless name, and I owe it to their memory and to myself to make this declaration. You, madame, have with great kindness received me, an insignificant stranger, into your house to partake of the dancing-lessons ; but after what I have heard to-day I can no longer participate in them, as my continuing to do so would give colour to the falsehoods that have been spread concerning me, and cause me to be suspected of being an impostor who abuses the hospitality of your house. Therefore I thank you from my heart for all your kindness, and beg you to keep a friendly remembrance of me."

This speech was somewhat too pathetic for the company to whom it was addressed, but, nevertheless, it produced some effect. For several minutes there was a deep silence ; the countess, petrified, held her untasted cup of tea in the air, and the lady of the house looked down embarrassed. Anthony made a low bow, and went to the door.

At that moment a fair form flew out from the paralyzed group and seized both his hands in hers. Anthony looked into Leonora's weeping eyes, and heard her say to him with a gentle voice, "Farewell !" then the door shut behind him, and all was over,

Anthony walked slowly home. His mind was as quiet and calm as if he had never been in that house. He looked with pleasure at the large flakes of snow which were falling, and at the footsteps left by the pedestrians on that which had already fallen. If he felt any pain, it was without bitterness. He raised his head proudly, and turned his thoughts to other subjects : he thought of his parents, of the letters he had written for the Principal in the morning, and of the knavish Tinkles, whom Fink had again had occasion to turn out of the office. But accompanying all these thoughts, a melodious sound kept vibrating in his ear—it was Leonora's "Farewell."

Anthony had no sooner left the drawing-room than animation returned to the society. The first words which were heard was the reproof of the mother to her daughter for her extraordinary conduct ; "Leonora, you have forgotten yourself," said the countess, gently.

"Let her alone," said the baron, with presence of mind. "Our daughter has only done what her father should have done : the young man has behaved nobly, and deserves our esteem."

Among the other group a lively conversation commenced. "That

was a real theatrical scene," said the lady of the house, with an assumed smile; "but who told us?"

"Yes, who told it?" interposed Herr von Toennchen.

All eyes were directed to Fink.

"Yes; it was you who told it," recommenced Frau von Baldereck, rising with dignity.

"Yes, indeed," continued Herr von Zernitz, "and yet take my word for it there is something in the report; I myself was witness to a deed before a notary," added he, incautiously; "explain how that was, Fink."

"I also must beg for an explanation," said the lady of the house, much irritated.

"From me, worthy lady?" said Fink, with the air of an innocent person, to whom an injustice has been done. "What should I know of these stories? I have contradicted them as much as I possibly could."

"Yes, that you did," said several voices; "but you allowed it to be thought—"

"Yet you said—" cried out Frau von Baldereck.

"What, my good lady?" coolly asked the indomitable Fink.

"That this Herr Wohlfart was connected in some secret way with the—the Emperor."

"That is impossible," answered Fink, with great earnestness; "it is an unfortunate misunderstanding. I gave you a description of that gentleman's appearance, who was then unknown to you, and it is possible that, on that occasion, I may have mentioned some accidental likeness."

"But what about the property?" interfered Herr von Toennchen; "you yourself made over the property to him, and this cession was accompanied by extraordinary circumstances. Did you not desire us to keep it a profound secret?"

"As you have kept my secret so well, that you have told it everywhere," said Fink, with a laugh, "you and Zernitz are evidently answerable for having spread this ridiculous report. Observe, my good sirs, my friend Wohlfart one day, in joke, expressed a wish to possess property in America, and I, for fun, presented him, as a Christmas present, with a possession that I had on Long Island, near New York; that possession consists of a gravel-pit covered with brushwood, on which stands a fowler's wooden hut, erected for the purpose of shooting wild-fowl. When I begged you not to mention it, it was for the purpose of carrying on the joke, and I am sorry that you have spun this rope out of a cobweb, by which an amiable young man is shut out of our society." There was a cold sneer on his countenance as he continued: "However, I am delighted to see how much you all share in my feelings of contempt for those servile minds that consider a person as a gentleman because some foreign potentate is said to care about him. As we have opened the evening with a declaration, I will also make one—that Herr Anthony Wohlfart is the legitimate son of the late auditor-general of Ostrau, and that I shall consider any further mention of the subject as an insult to my greatest friend. And now, my good lady, I beseech you to be gracious to me again. I am engaged to Fraulein Eugenie for the first quadrille, and cannot wait any longer."



In Frau von Baldereck's mind there was a momentary struggle between wounded pride and motherly solicitude; at last the latter prevailed, as might be expected in so kind a nature; and she said to Fink, with a reproachful look, "I fear you have been playing off a joke upon us!" But Fink shook his head, and answered frankly, "One does not joke where one feels." Upon which he led Fraulein Eugenie to dance.

While they were taking their places, Lieutenant von Zernitz said to him, "You have made fools of us, Fink; I am sorry to be obliged to demand an explanation from you."

"Be reasonable, and demand nothing," answered Fink. "We have so often shot for a wager, it would be folly to take each other for a mark."

As Fink was by far the best shot amongst them, Herr von Zernitz began to think he was in the right. There was a little temporary coolness, which was ended one evening by shaking hands over a second bottle of Burgundy, and thus the affair ended. But Fink's interest in the dancing lessons diminished when Anthony ceased to attend them; and neither Theone Lara nor Leonora had any longer reason to fear his allusions, for when he came he contented himself with paying his respects to the young lady of the house, and some of the older ladies, and took no notice of the other young ones.

Anthony had disappeared from the society like a shooting star. He was never seen there again. It occurred to Frau von Baldereck, though a little too late, that it would be but decent to invite him occasionally to her house, to show him and others that it was on his own account, and not for other reasons, he had been asked before, and some of the country nobility thought the same; but, as we have before remarked, these invitations came rather late, and as Anthony always excused himself, it happened to him, as it often does to more important persons in society, that he was forgotten. The witnesses to the great deed of cession, Zernitz and Toennchen, continued to talk to him when they met him in the street, for awhile, but at last ceased to know him.

Our Anthony did not care much for this, but devoted himself with energy to the business of the office. The morning following the scene we have related, he knocked at the door of the small back room, and entered the sanctuary of the Principal. He told him what he had said to Frau von Baldereck the night before, and added, "I do not intend to return to that society; and if I have not of late always done my duty, I beg your pardon, and will be more careful in future."

"I have no reason to complain of you," answered the merchant, kindly. "Tell me the sum you need to settle your affairs." Anthony took a bit of paper out of his pocket, on which he had conscientiously put down his debts. Herr Schroeter called his cashier, had the amount paid to Anthony and placed to his account, and the matter was settled.

The next day, Fink said to him, "Why, you went off like a bomb, and the seniors of the society bore witness that you had behaved properly."

"Who said so?" asked Anthony. Fink told him Baron Rothsattel's words, and feigned not to see that Anthony's face was covered with a deep blush. "However, it would have been wiser," continued Fink, "if you had not driven things to extremities. Why shun the whole

of the society, in which there are some persons to whom you have taken a liking?"

"I have acted," said Anthony, "as my conscience dictated; one who was older, and knew more of the world, might have done it more cleverly, perhaps. You must not be angry with me for not having followed your advice in this matter."

"It is curious," thought Fink, as he descended the stairs, "under what different circumstances men learn to use their own will. That boy learnt self-dependence last night, and whatever fate may ordain for him, I am sure he will do well."

It told well for Anthony, as well as for his friend, that their friendship was not disturbed by what had occurred. On the contrary, it gained more in real value. Fink treated his younger friend with greater respect, and Anthony assumed greater liberty, and got accustomed to assert his own will, even against that of Fink's. Indeed, the sounder judgment of the one often restrained the wild tricks and insolence of the other. Anthony performed his duties in the office with the greatest punctuality, and his kindness and consideration towards his colleagues were greater than ever. Fink, also, in consequence of his example, without almost being aware of it himself, became more regular in his appearance at the office, and attended more to his hours. There was only one subject on which he never spoke to his friend, although he knew that Anthony was thinking of it constantly; that was, the young lady who had shown so much heart and courage at that last dancing lesson.

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### CHAPTER XIII.

NEVER before had the flowers bloomed so brightly, nor the birds sung so gaily, as this summer at the beautiful seat of the baron. During the past winter, his family had become united in ties of intimacy with those of many of the country nobility, and the friendships begun at the tea-table or in the ball-room, were continued under the blue sky. There were continual visitors at the castle. Frau von Baldereck came with Eugenie, and sometimes the green frog, Zernitz, Toennchen, and Frau von Werner also, with her son and four daughters. Theone and Hildegard passed weeks with Leonora, and the house seemed almost too small for so many guests. In all the rooms and on the green lawn, the slender figures of the young ladies might be seen moving. They sympathised in each other's feelings, read comedies together, danced and played all kinds of games; and when the young gentlemen bored them, and did not enter into their feelings, they got into the boat, took the oars, and rowing themselves from terra firma, took up an unassailable position in the middle of the lake. How sweet were their reveries whilst the oars splashed gently in the water, and the moon rose above the trees of the park! The water-lilies raised their white heads around the boat, rejoiced that their enemies, the swans, had retired to rest, the moon danced upon the ripple, the nightingale sang in the grove, and a warm breeze blew the fragrance of flowering shrubs across the lake. Theone and Hildegard sang duets, Hulda Werner spoke of the tender reminiscences she

should have of the place, or Eugenie made quizzing remarks on the unhappy gentlemen who were running to and fro along the shore, in vain endeavouring, by force or cunning, to become masters of the boat.

But the most charming time was the Sunday evenings, when the winter reunions were repeated by turns, at the Rothsattels', Werners', and Balderecks'. When they did not dance, they had all kinds of fun. The young people disguised themselves with cloaks, shawls, and handkerchiefs in the most laughable manner; and then Zernitz, who was a great adept at these things, arranged a tableau, and the fathers and mothers formed the spectators. Or they acted charades, either extempore, or having their parts written on scraps of paper which they kept in their hands during the performance; all the week the girls were thinking of good words for the purpose, and how they could best be represented.

How happy Leonora was at that time! She had indeed remained somewhat original, and her mother shook her head as some saucy idea or vehement exclamation escaped from the lips of the beautiful girl. As a matter of course Leonora acted the part of gentleman in the dances, when one was wanting: she was leader in all audacious exploits contrived by the young ladies. One day she led her whole company to a place five miles off, where she pretended there was a fine prospect, then made them go to the little inn of the nearest village to sup on milk and brown bread, and drove them home dead tired late in the evening, in a peasant's cart which she had hired, standing up herself and driving. She assumed the airs of a patroness, and treated the young men as if they were little boys with bread and butter in their hands; she made them relate stable anecdotes to her; and once she appeared herself, to the great horror of her mother, as a gentleman in a dramatic scene, with a whip and woollen moustache, which she curled in most approved fashion; but she looked so very lovely that her mother could not find it in her heart to scold her seriously.

If anybody was dissatisfied with the new style of life, it was the baroness. Her husband was full of business and distractions: the cloudless, calm serenity of former years had vanished from his soul. Even now, in the summer, he was constantly going to the town, and spent many evenings at the club in the society of old brother officers who still remained bachelors, and stayed smoking with them instead of returning to his home. He had constant business with Ehrenthal, and took pleasure in society which he formerly would have despised. It was a slight alteration, only visible to a wife's eye, and she even thought it wrong to regret it.

But a great pleasure was in store for her: Eugene, her son, passed his examination for his commission, and announced his intention of visiting them to show off his epaulettes. The mother had his room newly arranged, and the father placed there a gun-stand and a new hunting outfit as a present. When the hour drew near for Eugene's arrival, the baron could not wait at home, but ordered his horse and went to meet him at the next village. And when a small cloud of dust announced the approach of the rider, the father recognized the slender figure of the young hussar and the countenance so like his beloved wife. He sprang from his horse like a young man; the son did the same: and it was a pleasure to see the two chivalrous-looking

figures embrace each other on the high road; and very noble they looked as they rode together towards the castle.

"I bring you good news from the regiment," began Eugene, after the first affectionate interchange of questions and answers; "first of all, the colonel sends you greeting."

"He was a wild fellow in his day," said the father.

"Now he is an old grumbling bear," replied the son. "Our promotion will be rapid. Waldorf will be obliged to leave on account of his chest, which grows worse and worse; Baldwin Tronka wishes to be placed in another regiment, having had a quarrel with his captain; I will tell you all about it by-and-by; and Stallinger gets the majority of his uncle, who is dying. He will be a fabulously rich fellow, they say twenty thousand a-year."

"That is an exaggeration," said the father; "the entailed property is not much larger than our estate."

"At all events he gives his horse to his sergeant," his son replied, "and has promised our mess a magnificent feast; how do you like my brown horse?" They stopped before the court, and the lieutenant showed off his horse: the baron examined it critically and pronounced his approval. They stopped again at the stable: "We shall surprise the ladies," said the baron. When the groom had taken the horses, the father and son could not help entering the stable for a minute. First they examined the baron's riding stud, then they went over the farm horses. The lieutenant, with an air of patronage, stroked the neck of one horse and then of another as old acquaintances, and passed judgment on their value with military brevity, to the great delight of his father; the farm servants stood respectfully around; father and son began eagerly to relate to each other sporting anecdotes, the baron with the composure of an old hand, and the lieutenant with juvenile ardour, delighted to show his youthful experiences by the side of his father's more mature knowledge. Leonora's pony first reminded them of the ladies, and they hastened from the stable to the house.

In the bower of roses the baroness held her son in her arms, whilst Leonora patted him on the shoulders, coaxingly. And now there was real happiness in the castle. The eyes of the parents beamed as they looked on the handsome figure of the young cavalier. If some of his expressions and his manners occasionally reminded them of the barrack-stables, the baroness bore it with a gentle smile, for in old times the stable was the entrance-hall through which the cavalier passed to the elegant manners of the drawing-room. Among the young ladies, Eugene at once assumed the superiority; at least he was their favourite companion in all pleasure hours. He made visits in the neighbourhood, and one fete followed another.

Only one circumstance disturbed the enjoyment of the baron's life—he could not contrive to make his income meet his expenditure. What for twenty years had been possible, appeared now quite impossible. The winter season in town, the increase of company at his house, his son's epaulettes, Leonora's smart dresses, also the interest he had to pay the landschaft, altogether pressed heavily on him. The produce of the estate was waited for impatiently, and disposed of hastily, so that his income did not become greater or more secure, and many a wise project of improvement remained unexecuted. The

baron had intended to plant a dry, sandy bit of ground at the further extremity of his property with fir-trees, but even the insignificant cost of this was too heavy. More than once he was obliged to open the valuable chest which contained his precious bonds, and take out some of them. His brow became clouded, and a restless disquiet took the place of his usually steady, composed character. However, it was no longer the tormenting anguish of his first experience. He had already had some practice in money transactions, and looked at things less scrupulously than formerly. There must be some way of getting out of these embarrassments, thought he; it would be only necessary to live in town one, or at most two winters longer, to finish Leonora's education, and then he would return with fresh vigour to his farming life, and he felt it would be no great sacrifice to him. Then he might realise his industrial projects with the view to the future prospects of his children. Meanwhile he determined upon taking Ehrenthal's advice. He thought him, on the whole, an honest man, so far at least as a money-dealer could be in his transactions with a nobleman; but the main point was that Ehrenthal knew the position of his affairs, and therefore he would not feel as shy with him as he would in speaking on the subject to a stranger.

As usual, the money-dealer made his appearance just at the right moment. His diamond pin glittered, his cringing civilities to the baroness were more ridiculous than ever, and his admiration of the property really boundless. The baron took him over the farm in the highest good humour, and at last said, "You must give me some advice, Ehrenthal."

Ehrenthal looked cunningly at the baron.

Only a few years had passed since they had taken a similar walk through the farm-buildings, and how times had altered! Then the dealer had to give his advice as cautiously and as much enveloped in sweets as one gives medicine to a fractious child; now, the proud lord begged for his assistance.

The baron continued, with a tone of assumed indifference, "My expenses this year have been larger than formerly. The bonds require replenishing. I must think of some means of increasing my income. What, in your opinion, would be the best thing to do for this object?"

The eyes of the dealer sparkled, but he replied with becoming humility, "What ought to be done the baron knows better than I."

"Only none of your transactions," interposed the baron, cautiously; "I will not enter again into partnership with you."

Ehrenthal answered, shaking his head, "There are not often speculations which I could recommend with a good conscience to my lord baron. You have forty-five thousand thalers in bonds; why keep these bonds which give so little interest? If you buy with them a good mortgage at five per cent., as you only pay the land-chaft four, you will be a clear gainer of four hundred and fifty thalers; and you might even make a greater profit. Many a good mortgage at five per cent. is offered for sale a great bargain to the purchaser who can pay ready money. You may, perhaps, be able to buy a mortgage for forty-five thousand thalers for forty thousand."

The baron answered, "That was my idea; but the security of such

mortgages as are for sale in the market, in the hands of you dealers is very questionable, and I dare not venture upon it."

Ehrenthal, with a gesture of the hand, seemed to repel any application of this reproach to himself, and said, "I do not like dealing in mortgages which are in the market in the hands of agents; these are not what you should have. You ought to apply to a trustworthy person. You have a lawyer who can, perhaps, get you a safe mortgage."

"Then you do not know of any?" asked the baron, in the hope that Ehrenthal would take the trouble off his hands.

"I know of none," he answered, decidedly; "but if you wish I will make secret inquiries; there are always some to be got. Your lawyer will also tell you what he thinks safe; only these gentlemen do not give themselves much trouble with the transactions preceding the purchase; and if you do it through them, you will have to pay the full sum, whereas through a dealer you might get it for some thousands less."

As this proposed profit was a great object to the baron, he silently made up his mind. He wished to be cautious, but determined on buying an existing mortgage rather than place the money in the hands of his lawyer. So he said to Ehrenthal, "There is no hurry. If you should meet with any good mortgage, let me know."

"I will do my best," answered the dealer; "but it will be desirable for my lord baron himself to make inquiries, as I am not in the habit of doing much business in mortgages."

"Though this assertion was not true, it gained the desired object, for the cool indifference of the dealer considerably increased the confidence of the baron in him. But Ehrenthal was in great haste to leave that day: he neglected the fine wool of the sheep, overlooked the plumpness of the sparrows on the roof, and abused his coachman for driving him so slowly: "If I were to fasten the bridle to the horns of a snail I should go faster," he exclaimed, angrily.

The coachman flogged his horses, and turning his head, said rudely, "If you gave your horses more corn they would not go like snails; two pecks of oats, and he wishes to gallop on stony roads!"

The baron went to town the following day, and desired his legal friend to make the necessary preparations for obtaining a mortgage, and he did not conceal from him that he wished to make some profit by it.

The sensible lawyer strongly advised him to give up all idea of such profit, as there was no prospect of obtaining a safe investment at less than the full value. This counsel had precisely the effect of disposing the baron still more to follow his own judgment in the purchase of the mortgage.

Some days after, a tall, stout man with red shining face was announced to the baron as Herr Pinkus, from the city.

The worthy publican was shown into the baron's study, and hastened to make excuses for his visit. He had heard that the noble baron wished to invest some money, and he knew of a very secure and advantageous mortgage of forty thousand thalers on a large property in a contiguous province, belonging to the rich Count Zaminsky, who was living abroad. The estate on which the mortgage was held had all kinds of advantages: it consisted of three or four farms and a

wood of more than two thousand morgons, which was reported to be full of fine timber. Four villages were bound to do service, and one hundred houses had to pay rent to the proprietor. In short, it was a possession worthy of a prince. And this mortgage of forty thousand thalers, with its rights, was registered immediately after the first hundred thousand, and was to be followed by five or six other mortgages, which, though smaller, were still considerable sums. The mortgage was at present in the possession of Count Zaminsky himself, who had delivered it to an agent for sale, and this first-rate investment was, he hinted, possibly to be had for ninety per cent., that is, for thirty-six thousand thalers. It was a pity that the domain should lie in a neighbouring province, where agriculture was still carried on in an old-fashioned way, but it was close to the frontier, and the county town had good roads, which connected it with other parts of the country; in short, there was nothing that, on an impartial investigation, did not appear advantageous in the mortgage, and Pinkus would never have thought of giving up such a chance to any but one who united every virtue in such a distinguished degree as the baron.

The baron listened to all this with the composure of a man of experience. Before he took his departure, Pinkus drew out of his pocket a thick bundle of papers which purported to be the documents itself, and placed it confidentially on the table before the baron, that he might examine the truth of his statements at his leisure.

Next morning, the baron drove with the documents to his legal friend, and desired him to peruse it, and to make the necessary inquiries concerning it. He himself ascended the black steps to the white varnished door of Herr Ehrenthal.

Ehrenthal was enchanted with the honour conferred on him; he threw off his dressing-gown, and insisted on the baron's honouring him with his company at breakfast. The baron accepted. He was taken into the grand drawing-room of the house, and saw with amusement the mixture of smart curtains, red velvet sofas, bad oil paintings, which had probably been bought at some auction, and the dirty floor. The beautiful Rosalie entered soon after with her raven locks, in a rustling silk dress, made a low courtesy, and proceeded to lay the table for breakfast. The baron was struck with the contrast between the affected manners of the daughter and the cringing demeanour of the father, and enjoyed the idea of the description he should give to the baroness and Leonora at tea, of this wonderful mixture of luxury and vulgarity. He sat on the couch and smiled kindly on Ehrenthal, who, much elated, sat opposite to him with a humble smile on his countenance. At last, after having made some civil speeches to the beautiful daughter, the baron asked, "Do you know a certain Herr Pinkus, dear Ehrenthal?"

At this business-like commencement the daughter disappeared, and the father settled himself on his chair. "Yes, I know him," he said, coolly; "he is a money-dealer in a small way, and I believe him to be an honest man. He is a man of no importance; his business lies in Poland."

"Did you tell him of my wish to buy a mortgage?" inquired the baron.

"Why should you suppose that I told him?" answered Ehrenthal. "If he has been with you about a mortgage," he continued, tossing

back his head, "he must have heard of it from some other man of business with which I have spoken on the subject. Pinkus is in a very small way, how can he get a mortgage for you?" Here Herr Ehrenthal showed by gestures how insignificant he considered Pinkus, and raised his eyes as if to express the immeasurable greatness of the baron.

The baron told him what the mortgage was that had been offered to him, and asked about the estates and situation of the count.

Ehrenthal knew nothing positive, but recollected that there was in the town a respectable man of business from that part of the country, and offered to find him out and to send him to the baron's house.

The baron accepted, and rose.

Ehrenthal accompanied him down to the entrance hall, and said, when they parted, "Be cautious about the mortgage, my lord baron; you have good money, and there are many bad mortgages; there are also good ones, but agents say a great deal to pass off their wares. As to Loebel Pinkus, he is only a small dealer, and will gain little by the transaction. He is, however, as far as I know, an honest man. What you tell me about the mortgage seems to be good; but I repeat, my lord baron, be cautious."

As the baron had learnt nothing by this wordy speech, he went home, and awaited anxiously the arrival of the foreign agent. He had not to wait long before Herr Loewenberg made his appearance, who was a counterpart of Ehrenthal and Pinkus, only he was somewhat thinner, and, as a man from that province, bore a heavy cane, and had a cap in his hand. He introduced himself as a wine merchant, and seemed very well informed about the estates in question, and the present position of the count. He stated that he was still young, and lived abroad; that his late father had lived rather extravagantly, but that now everything was in better order; people spoke well of the present proprietor, and though the estates were encumbered, the family were so rich that there could be no danger to their prospects. The estates were not in a high state of cultivation, but at any rate much could be made of them, and he hoped the young count would do it. Nothing that he said was exaggerated; it all sounded moderate and reasonable; the whole was decidedly favourable; and when the stranger left, the baron had firmly resolved on making the bargain. In order not to neglect anything, he called on one of his friends, and asked him for information. He did not hear much, but it was not unfavourable; the essential thing was, that the family was very old, and respected in their province, and that the late Count Zaminsky had led a wild life. Before he returned home he received a visit from Herr Ehrenthal, who informed him that the wool on the estate was not fine, and heard in exchange from the baron, that he would wait for his lawyer's opinion before he came to a decision.

Ehrenthal's small office-room was on the ground-floor of his house. Itzig was sitting there with a quire of paper before him, very much bored at having to wait so long for his master, when Ehrenthal entered. He was in a state of great excitement, laid his cane on the table, but forgot to take off his hat, and paced to and fro about the room impatiently.

"What is the man about?" thought Itzig; "what is the matter



with him?" Ehrenthal then stopped in front of Itzig, and said: "Itzig, you shall prove to-day whether you are worthy of having eaten my bread, and having been admitted to my dinner-table."

"What am I to do?" said Veitel, rising from his seat.

"First you shall summon Loebel Pinkus to come here, then you shall order a bottle of wine and two glasses, and after that you may go. I shall not want you again to-day. But you may try to find out to whom Justizrath Harn, who lives in the market-place, has written, at Bosmin, and if he has not written to-day, to whom he will write to-morrow. I will give you five thalers to enable you to ascertain this, and if you bring me an answer to-night you shall have a ducat."

Veitel's soul was on fire, but he replied with apparent coldness: "I know nothing of the justizrath's clerks, and require time to make their acquaintance. To-morrow night you shall have an answer; you can keep your ducat for me till then."

"If you can obtain the information, come at any time, even if it be midnight," shouted out Ehrenthal after him.

Itzig bounded upstairs, ordered the bottle of wine, and rushed like a bloodhound into the streets.

Meanwhile Herr Ehrenthal, with his hat still on his head, and his hands folded behind his back, continued to pace up and down the office, nodding his head like a Chinese idol. In the dusk of the room he looked like a solid black ghost, that could not keep its decapitated head on its shoulders.

Veitel had a lively discussion with himself, as to his errand. "What is the matter?" he asked, "it must be a great affair, and is to be kept secret from me. I am to fetch Pinkus: he was some days ago with Ehrenthal, and went the day after into the country to Baron Rothsattel's, so the business concerns the baron. And Ehrenthal will regale some one with a glass of wine, but Pinkus does not take wine, it must be some one else, it cannot be the baron himself, for a nobleman is not taken into the office, he must be received upstairs in the red velvet room. If Pinkus has anything to do with this affair with the baron, he can only be used as a snare for the Redtail, and he who is coming to-night, whom I shall not see, he must be the beater—and Ehrenthal himself! When he went downstairs with the baron, I heard him say, 'Be cautious!' consequently the old one acts the scarecrow. When Ehrenthal does that, it must be an important and delicate business." At this point of his monologue, Veitel reached his inn: he gave the order to his landlord, who hastened from the shop into his room, to put on a better coat: Itzig then continued his walk and self-discussion. "If the clerk who takes the letters from the justizrath's office, goes at seven o'clock, and I can read the directions of the letters, I shall save the five thalers," he reflected, but added with a sigh: "it won't do, he throws the letters in a heap into the letter-box, and the postman is too quick, I shall not be able to read the addresses. Perhaps, however, it may be done: the man who carries the letters to the post is usually a young fellow; perhaps I can get round him. And if that will not do, I have another plan; I know a lawyer's clerk who has had many a groschen from me. The clerks all know one another. If I give him two thalers, he will get the list of letters from his colleague for me, and I shall save three thalers."

Having made up his mind to this, he walked up to the lawyer's house, and placed himself as if he was waiting for some one, so that he could watch the door of the office. It was very near the time for its close, and several persons who had been consulting that much-sought-after notary came down the stairs. At last, hasty steps were heard, and a young man rushed out of the house, carrying a packet of letters. Veitel went after him with rapid strides, and, turning sharp round the next corner, contrived to get before him. He touched his hat. "You come from the house of Justizrath Harn?" "Yes," said the clerk, hastily, and tried to pass on.

"I am from the country; and have been these three days waiting for an important letter from the justizrath. I have come to town to-day in order to see him. Perhaps you have a letter for me?"

The clerk looked at him suspiciously, and asked, "What is your name?" Veitel put his hand in his pocket, took a piece of eight groschens quickly out, and said, "I will do nothing wrong by you, young man; I only wish you would be kind enough to let me look whether there is a letter for me."

"I cannot take your money," answered the clerk, shortly, on the point of going on; "give me your name, then."

"Bernhard Magdeburg, of Ostrau," said Veitel, quickly; "but the letter might also be directed to my uncle."

"There is no letter for you," replied the clerk, perusing rapidly the directions.

Veitel's eyes glanced over the letters as if they would burn the paper, but he found it impossible to follow the rapid motions of the clerk with his eyes, so he seized the packet of letters with a vigorous grasp, and, whilst the enraged clerk collared him, shouting out, "What do you mean, sir?—how dare you?" he hurriedly read the directions, returned the letters with the utmost tranquillity, and said, again touching his hat, "Thank you, there's nothing for me there." The indignant clerk tried to keep him, saying, "Sir! how dare you be so impudent?"

"Don't miss the post," said Veitel, good-humouredly: "I will now go myself to the justizrath." So saying, he turned quickly towards the house, and escaped from the clerk, who stood for a moment pettified at his audacity, and then hurried off to the post-office, to recover lost time.

Veitel, in spite of his quick power of observation, had only retained in his memory a few of the directions. "Perhaps the ducat has been gained," he said; "if not, there is no harm done;" and, gliding slowly along, he returned by a roundabout way to the office, placed himself at the door, and listened. The worthy Pinkus was speaking, but they talked in a low voice, and Veitel could make out very little. At last, however, the voices rose, and it sounded as if there was a quarrel between the two gentlemen.

"How can you ask such an enormous sum for one errand?" cried out Ehrenthal, in a rage. "I am mistaken in thinking you a trustworthy man."

"I will be trustworthy," interposed Pinkus; "but I must have four hundred thalers, or the business cannot be concluded."

"How can you say that—what do you know of the business? Who are you that you should know anything?"

"I know enough to get four hundred thalers from the baron, if I go and tell him what I know," said Pinkus, loudly.

"You are a rascal!" exclaimed Ehrenthal, in a fury; "you are a spy! I despise you! Do you know whom you have to deal with? Do you treat me so?" he continued, with increased rage. "I can deprive you of your credit, and make you known to all men of business as a rogue."

"And I will make known to the baron what a rogue you are," replied Pinkus, angry in his turn.

At these words the door opened, and Veitel slunk behind the stairs.

"I will give you till to-morrow morning to consider," cried out Pinkus, as he went out of the office and rushed away.

Veitel entered the office with the utmost composure, without being perceived by his master, who was raging up and down the room like a wild beast in its cage. "Good gracious! to think that this Loebel should be such a traitor! He will blab the whole thing out in the market-place!—he will ruin me!" said Ehrenthal, piteously.

"Why should he ruin you?" asked Veitel, throwing his hat on the desk.

"What are you doing here? What have you heard?" exclaimed Ehrenthal, wrathfully.

"I have heard all," said Veitel, coolly. "You were both bawling so loud, that one could hear you in the hall. Why have you kept this business secret from me? If you had told me what you were about, I could have got you Loebel cheaper."

Herr Ehrenthal stared at the bold lad, and could only utter, "What do you say?"

"I know that fellow Pinkus," continued Veitel, determined to take part in what was going on; "if you give him a hundred thalers, he will be true to you, and sell a good mortgage to the baron."

"What do you know of the mortgage?" said Ehrenthal, alarmed.

"I know enough to help you, if I choose to do so," answered Veitel; and I will help you, if you have confidence in me."

Herr Ehrenthal still kept staring with astonishment at the face of his clerk. A faint idea dawned upon him that his assistant had more coolness and decision than himself. At length he exclaimed, between hope and anxiety, "You are a brave fellow, Veitel! Get me that Pinkus back—he shall have a hundred thalers."

"I have also read the directions of the letters the justizrath has sent to the post. There is a letter among them for the lawyer Walther."

"I thought so!" exclaimed Ehrenthal, delighted. "It is good, Itzig; get that Loebel for me."

"I had to give the clerk of the justizrath five thalers, and I am to have a ducat, which makes eight thalers," continued Veitel, without moving.

"All right," answered Ehrenthal, "you shall have the money; but above all, we must have Pinkus."

Veitel hastened to the inn, and searched for the landlord. He had retired to his room, where he was walking about in a state of excitement, and working himself into a rage, by recalling all Ehrenthal's opprobrious epithets.

Veitel opened the door, and said eagerly, "Pinkus, I am come from Ehrenthal, and I insist upon your accepting a hundred thalers,

and helping my master. You shall not behave like a rogue to him. If you know anything of him that could injure him with the baron, I know something of you that could injure you with the police."

Pinkus stood still and suppressed an oath that was on his lips. "I am an honest man," he exclaimed boldly, "and have no occasion to be afraid of the police."

"They will ask what magazine you keep in the next house, and from what people you buy your goods. But I will do you no harm if you consent to take the hundred thalers from Ehrenthal, and to give me a bed and room in your house at a low rent, and treat me as a man of business like yourself."

Pinkus was taken by surprise. He spluttered and fought with his hands and feet against the hostile air, which offered him no resistance—but he was vanquished. He swore repeatedly as to his honesty, mixing up his oaths with violent complaints against Ehrenthal, till at last the waves of his moral indignation became smaller and smaller, and there remained only a slight ripple on his mind—a sign that he was becoming peaceable.

Veitel, leaning against the stove, had waited quietly for the change, and carried the reconciled man back in triumph to Ehrenthal. At first, these two honourable men regarded each other with hostile looks, then shook hands and assured each other of their mutual esteem; whilst Veitel, as the genius of peace, stood by looking at both with a feeling which was the very reverse of esteem. Pinkus pocketed a note of one hundred thalers and took his leave, as his assistance was no longer thought necessary in the great business, and Veitel shortly after opened the door for Herr Loewenberg, the agent from the country, and smiled secretly when Ehrenthal said almost imploringly, "Dear Itzig, you may go now." This time he went home contentedly, without listening at the key-hole, and took possession of a small room on the first floor of Pinkus' house that very evening, drank the glass of brandy, and ate the roast Frau Pinkus set before him.

Meanwhile, Ehrenthal said to Loewenberg, as they sat comfortably together over a glass of wine, "I have learned that Justizrath Harn is obtaining information about the mortgage from the lawyer Walther, of your town. Can anything be done with that man?"

"There is nothing to be done with money," the other answered, thoughtfully; "but something may be done in another way. He does not know that I am charged with the sale of the mortgage by the count's attorney. I shall call upon him on my own business, and on some pretext will praise the property, and speak well of the state of the count's affairs. I will even tell him that I should like to buy the mortgage myself."

Ehrenthal said, shaking his head, "If he knows the count and his estate, no praise of yours will be sufficient to make him write a favourable letter."

"It will, though; these attorneys are obliged to ask for information from us about the state of people's affairs; they cannot know of themselves as well as we do, about the sale and purchase of wool and corn. We must do what we can, and I believe it will be of use."

Ehrenthal again shook his head doubtfully, and said, with a sigh, "You may believe me, Loewenberg, it gives me great anxiety."

"It will be a fine gain," said the other, consolingly; "the purchase will pay ninety per cent., of which seventy will be sent to the count, at Paris; out of the twenty remaining you will pay five to the count's attorney, and five to me for my trouble, and there will be ten per cent. for you. Four thousand thalers is a handsome profit for a bargain in which no capital is required."

"Yet it gives me great anxiety," said Ehrenthal. "Believe me, Loewenberg, that I am so agitated with brooding over it, that I cannot sleep at night."

Half-an-hour later, an extra post-carriage passed through the gate. The following morning Loewenberg called upon Herr Walther, and talked him into the belief that the state of Count Zaminsky was not so bad as was reported in the neighbourhood.

In about a week, Baron von Kathssattel received a letter from his lawyer, enclosing a copy of one from Herr Walther. The notes of both lawyers represented the purchase of the mortgage as a thing that they could not positively dissuade him from; and when, next day, Ehrenthal called on the baron, he had made up his mind to take the mortgage. He entered more readily into this transaction from the recollection of the quick profit of a thousand thalers which he had made in the former transaction with Ehrenthal. He was predisposed to think the mortgage good, and would have taken it, even if his lawyer had advised against it.

Ehrenthal offered, with great disinterestedness, to conclude the bargain with the count's agent, if the baron would give him full powers, as it happened that he had to make a professional tour in that district. The baron was well content to do this, as his feelings revolted against personally making a payment which was less than the sum named in the mortgage.

Another week, and he was in possession of a mortgage of forty thousand thalers, for which he had only given thirty-six thousand, and Ehrenthal and his friends also had made a good bargain; but Itzig the best of all, for he had acquired a bold over his master, and had become his counsellor and confidant in his most secret transactions. All parties were satisfied; the baron fetched his richly-carved casket, and put into it, in place of the clean white bonds of the *landschaft*, the dirty yellow roll of paper which now constituted his capital. He did not look into the chest with the same pleasure that he did formerly when it contained the bonds, but hastily shut it, and pushed it into his desk, like an old worn-out man of business who is glad to have done his work, then hastened into the ladies' room, and took off Ehrenthal's bows and civilities with great humour.

"I cannot bear him," said Leonora; "he looks like a fat mole."

"This time, at least, he has shown himself disinterested," said the father; "certainly, all these money-dealers have something ridiculous about them, and, with all one's good nature, one cannot help laughing at their bows."

The same evening, Herr Ehrenthal walked up and down his wife's room in a long dressing-gown, chuckling, and trying to sing; he patted the white neck of his daughter Rosalie, and threw sly and tender glances at his wife, till at last she asked him if he had settled his affairs with the baron.

"Yes," said Ehrenthal, gaily.

"The baron is a handsome man," remarked the daughter.

"He is a good man," said Ehrenthal, "but he has his weak points. He is one of those men who like low bows and humble speeches, and who pay their money that others may think for them. He would willingly give one per cent. to be spoken to hat in hand. There must be such people in the world, or what would become of our profession?"

The same evening, Veitel was sitting in his room, and the lawyer by his side, and Veitel related how the matter had been settled, and said, "So the red-tail is taken in the snare, and Ehrenthal has gained four thousand thalers."

Hippus had taken off his spectacles, and sitting on the square wood box, which Frau Pinkus was pleased to call a sofa, looked like a wise old monkey that despises the course of the world, and bites his keeper's legs. He listened with earnest attention to his pupil's report, shook his head now and then, or smiled when anything was to his taste.

When Veitel concluded his report with these words, "Ehrenthal is a coward, he loses his head in great affairs," Hippus exclaimed, contemptuously, "Ehrenthal is a simpleton. He cannot carry out anything great; he is a mean fellow; he has been always so; he hesitates when there is any risk, and stops short; if he tries to allure the baron by petty offers he will in the end kick him downstairs."

"But what should he do with him?" asked Veitel.

"He must prepare anxieties of all kinds for him," said Hippus, rising up with eagerness. "Great work, continual disquiet, daily and unceasing anxieties, that is what would break down the baron. These people are accustomed to little work and constant pleasure; everything is made easy to them from their childhood. There are but few who do not lose their head when they are distracted the whole year round with anxieties. That ruins them. If they go twice a-day round their farm, they think they have been working hard, whilst the bailiff is doing his best, and has often to remedy his master's mistakes. If Ehrenthal wishes to get the better of the baron, he must entangle him in great concerns, and must run some risk himself, and for that he wants resolution and common sense; he is but a simpleton who whistles the air he learns and afterwards droops his head."

Thus the lawyer instructed Veitel, on whom none of his clever lessons were lost, and who looked with a mixture of respect and awe on the little ugly devil who was wildly gesticulating before him. At last Hippus seized the brandy-bottle, and thumping it on the table, exclaimed, "To-night we'll have an extra bottle of pure brandy! What I have told you is worth more than a bottle of genuine."

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## CHAPTER XIV.

"I AM eighteen to-day," said Karl to his father, who, one Sunday morning, was sitting contentedly in his room, and seemed never tired of looking at the fine lad.

"That is true," answered the father; "there are eighteen candles on your cake."

"Well then, father," continued Karl, "it is high time for me to do something."

"You!" exclaimed the father, astounded, "what do you want to be, different from what you are? A dwarf you are, and will remain all the rest of your life."

"Be quiet with your eternal dwarf," answered Karl; "I will be a packer."

"Only listen to that!" exclaimed the old man; "a packer, indeed! why not a burgomaster, or king, or some such thing?"

"I am strong enough," continued Karl, resolutely; "I wish to gain my bread, like an honest man. Herr Wohlfart has been working on his own account for more than a year, and I am still treated as a boy."

"You want to gain your bread!" repeated the old man, looking at his son with increasing astonishment. "Do I not earn enough, and more than we want? Why should you behave as a miser?"

"I cannot be always tied to your leather apron," said Karl; "and if you earn a thousand thalers, would that make a man of me? and if I was to lose you what would become of me?"

"Of course you will lose me in a few years," said the giant, nodding his head; after that you can become what you choose, except a packer."

"Why should I not be what you are? don't be so obstinate."

"You don't know what you ask. Don't come over me with your ambition, I cannot bear ambitious people."

"And if I am not to be a packer," exclaimed Karl again, "I must learn something else, you must see that."

"Do you mean to say that you have learnt nothing?" said the old man sadly. "Oh, my poor child, think how much has been crammed into that little head! You have attended two classes in the infant school, four classes in the town school, and two in the school of industry, so you have gone through eight classes, and know every commodity as well as a clerk, is that nothing? you are a greedy boy."

"Well, but I must know something thoroughly as a profession," replied Karl; "a shoemaker, tailor, tradesman, or mechanic."

"Don't trouble yourself about that," said the father, "I have provided for it in your education; you are practical and honest," he added.

"To be sure I am," said Karl; "but could I make a pair of boots or cut out a coat?"

"You could," answered the old man, quietly; "try it and you will succeed."

"Wait a little, old bear, and we'll see that to-morrow; I will buy a piece of leather and make a pair of boots for you, and you shall feel how they pinch."

"Mind, I will not put on the first or second pair, but the third, they won't pinch."

"There is no arguing with you," said Karl angrily, "I know where to go for good advice: I cannot go on as I am; I will send some one to reason with you, who will tell you the same thing."

"Only don't be ambitious, Karl," said the old man, shaking his head, "and don't spoil my pleasure to-day. Now then give me a jug of beer, and be a good boy."

Karl placed the great jug before his father, and soon after took up his cap and left the room. The father remained sitting with his

beer, but his pleasure was disturbed. He kept watching the door through which Karl had gone out, occasionally glancing round the room, which, without his son's cheerful face, looked so lonely. At length he went into the next room, sat down on the bed, and pulled a heavy iron box from under the bedstead. He unlocked it, drew a bag of money out, made a mental calculation, then pushed the box back under the bed and returned to his beer.

Meanwhile Karl put on his best clothes, then went with hasty steps into the town and entered Anthony's room. "Good morning, Karl," said Anthony, "what do you come for?"

Karl began solemnly, "I come to ask your advice as to what I am to do, there is no use talking to my father; I wish to be a packer, and the old man will not hear of it; I proposed to be something else, and he puts me off to the time when he shall be dead: fine comfort for me indeed. He is a real Goliath. I am eighteen to-day: things must be altered. I help everywhere in the house, but that is not the right thing for me now."

"You are right," said Anthony; "but first I must wish you joy on your birthday; and stop, here is a book for you, take it as a birthday present, I will write my name in it."

"To his faithful Karl, from Anthony Wohlfart," read the delighted Karl. "Thank you, Herr Wohlfart, I have already sixty-five books: now the second shelf will be complete."

"Sit down by me, and let us hold council together. First of all, tell me how I can help you. Will it not be better for you to speak to Herr Schroeter himself—he is your godfather?"

"That would make it of too much importance; father would think that I wished to complain of him; with you it is more like a friend."

"You are right," agreed Anthony.

"And so I want you to talk to my father about me occasionally. He has great confidence in you, and knows that you wish me well."

"I will do so with pleasure," said Anthony; "but what profession do you prefer?"

"It is all the same to me," answered Karl, "provided it is something settled."

The following Sunday Anthony went to Sturm's house.

The abode of the foreman of the packers was a small house on the river, near the Custom-house; it was his own, and was distinguishable from the others by its being painted pink. Anthony opened the low door, wondering how it was possible for the giant to stow himself away in so small an abode. And when old Sturm rose up to welcome him, he thought that inexhaustible patience must be necessary to enable the huge man to put up with such a dwelling, for if he had stretched himself to his full height, it appeared as if his head must have infallibly gone through the roof. The giant was in his shirt sleeves, and, delighted with Anthony's visit, put out his enormous hand in welcome.

"I am very glad to see you in my house, Herr Wohlfart," said Sturm, pressing his hand as gently as possible.

"It is rather small for you, Herr Sturm," said Anthony, laughing; "you never looked so tall to me as in this room."



"My father was taller still," said Sturm, pleased; and he drew himself up, so that his chin rested on the top of the stove; "he was so high," said he, pointing to the cornice, where several marks were made with a lead pencil—"so high, and still broader. He was the chief of the packers, and the strongest man in the town, yet he was killed by a barrel not half as high as you. There, take a seat;" and he pushed an oak chair towards him, which Anthony had great difficulty in moving. "My Karl has told me that he has called on you, and that you have been very kind to him. He is a good boy, and makes me very happy; but he has degenerated. His mother was a little woman," continued Sturm, sorrowfully, and seizing his glass, which contained more than a quart of beer, drained it off at a draught.

"It is small beer," he said, to excuse himself; "may I offer you a glass? It is the custom of us packers to drink no other; but, to be sure, we drink it all day long."

"Your son would like to enter your corporation," said Anthony, anxious to come to the point.

"To be a packer!" exclaimed the giant; "no, that he never can be;" and he laid his hand confidentially on Anthony's knee; "he shall not, for my late wife begged me on her death-bed not to allow it—wherefore I will tell you presently. Our work is respectable, you know that well, sir; we are men in whom great trust is reposed; it is an honour to be a member of the packers' guild; hundreds are trying for it, whom we do not admit; there are few who have the strength, and still fewer who have—something else——"

"Honesty," said Anthony.

"Quite right," continued Sturm; "the strongest fail in that. It is not every one who can stand the temptation of being surrounded by all kinds of goods in any quantity, and handling them as if they were one's own, without taking any of them. So, you know, we think much of that. And the income is not bad—indeed, it may be called good. My late wife was a saving body. When she died I found her chest entirely filled with stockings, all for our Karl; and there was not only silver, but gold too. She was an economical wife, and saved all she could. But that is not my way, for what is the use of it? If one is practical, one need not care about money, and Karl will be a practical fellow. But not as a packer," he continued, shaking his head; "my late one would not have it, and she was right."

"Your work is very fatiguing," said Anthony.

"Fatiguing!" resumed Sturm, laughing; "it may fatigue one who is not strong enough for it—it might break his back; but it is not the fatigue; it is something else still; it is this!" At these words, he took a large jug from the corner, and filled his glass. "It is the small beer."

Anthony smiled. "I know you and your colleagues drink a good deal of it."

"A good deal," said Sturm, with dignity. "It is a custom with us, a very ancient custom; it has always been the way with the packers. They must be strong, they must be honest, and they must drink small beer. It is a necessity of our work; nobody can stand it who does not. Drinking water makes us weak, and so do wine and brandy; nothing but small beer does for us—that and olive oil. Look here, Herr Anthony." The giant stretched and took a small glass

from the board, half filled it with the best olive oil, and the other half with beer, put a quantity of sugar into the mixture, and drank it off, to Anthony's great disgust. "That makes one strong," said Sturm; "it is a secret of our guild; it makes such arms as this;" and he put his arm proudly on the table, and endeavoured in vain to span it with his hand. "But still there is a hitch," he added, in a lower voice; "none of us live to be more than fifty. You have never seen an old packer, for there are none. Fifty is the greatest age we any of us reach, the beer spirit will not let us live longer. My father was fifty when he died; the one we buried the other day was forty-nine—Herr Schroeter was at his funeral. I want some years of it still," he added, as if to calm Anthony.

Anthony looked anxiously at the honest packer. "But, Sturm, if you know that, why are you not more temperate?"

"Temperate!" asked Sturm, surprised; "what do you mean by temperate? It does not go to our heads. Forty pints a day is not much if one does not feel it."

Anthony looked incredulously at the packer.

"That is what I drink," said Sturm; "he whom we buried the other day could stand still more; and there was a time when he was stronger than I. Well, then, Herr Wohlfart, it is on that account my Karl, according to the wishes of his late mother, is not to be a packer. Amongst us it is said to be stuff and nonsense to talk about age: many who are not packers do not even reach fifty; they die of all kinds of illnesses from their swaddling clothes—illnesses we packers know nothing of. But she said it, and so it must be."

"And have you thought of anything else?" inquired Anthony. "Karl, it is true, is of great use in the business, and we shall miss him very much when he goes."

"It is just that," interrupted the packer. "You said rightly, they will all miss him, and I too. I am alone in the house since the death of my wife; when I see my little one's rosy cheeks within these walls, and hear his little hammer in your house, I am happy. When he goes away I shall be lonely in this room; I don't know how I shall bear it."

The old man's features were quivering with emotion. "But must he part from you entirely?" asked Anthony, after a while; "perhaps he might live on with you some years longer."

Sturm shook his head significantly. "I know him," he said; "he cannot: if he once takes up a thing in earnest he persists in it like a devil; he never thinks but of that one thing: but I have considered the subject the last few days, I will confess to you," he continued, confidentially. "I am wrong in thinking only of myself; the boy has not put his head into the world for my sake, but for his own—he must become something. Now, I ask you, what do you think my late wife would have wished him to be? Her brother lives in the country, and has a freehold there, where the high floods come from; he is a steady man, and would not change his property with any one. He visits me every year when he has finished shearing his sheep; he knows me, and he knows Karl; and to him I should like him to go, if I am not to keep him. It is far from here," he added, sorrowfully; "but he is a relation."

"That is a good idea, Sturm," said Anthony, happy to meet with

so few obstacles; "but I have always heard that in agriculture you cannot hope to be successful without capital."

"That is true," said the giant, raising his hand mysteriously; "he is not without fortune, he has some from his mother, and a little from his father also, he knows nothing of, for I wish him to be practical, so do not tell him."

"As you have so kindly arranged everything for your son," exclaimed Anthony, "do not leave him in uncertainty. It is quite right that he should be dissatisfied with his present occupation."

"He may hear it at once," said the old man, rising; "he is in the garden; and you shall be present." Sturm went to the door and shouted out to him to come in, which he did in great haste, saluted Anthony, and looked anxiously, now at him, and then at his father. The latter had resumed his seat, and said, in his usual tone, "Little imp, would you like to be a farmer?"

"A farmer!" exclaimed Karl, "I never thought of that; but then I must leave you, father."

"He thinks of that," said the old man, nodding to Anthony.

"But is it your will that I should leave you?" said Karl, surprised.

"Certainly, my little one," his father said, seriously; "it must be my will for the sake of your late mother."

"Then I am to go to uncle?" said the son.

"Only to him," said the father. "Opposition is useless; the thing is settled, provided, of course, that your uncle will have you. You are to be a farmer; to learn something useful, and leave your father."

"Father," said Karl, cast down, "I do not like to leave you."

"But you must like it, you ambitious imp," said the old man.

"Then come with me to the country," said the son.

"I go to the country!" Sturm laughed, and made the door of the room shake. "My imp wants to carry me in his pocket about the fields;" and he laughed till his eyes watered. "Come here, my Karl," and he drew his son near him, and held his head for a long while between his huge hands; "thou art a good boy; there must be separations in this world, if not now, in a few years."

So Karl left the Firm. In vain he tried, during the last days of his stay, to conceal his emotion by whistling; he tenderly patted his friend Pluto and the cat he had brought into the house; he performed his small tasks with greater zeal than ever, and kept as much as possible near his father, who kept looking constantly at his son, and sometimes left his barrel to go to him and put his hand silently on his head.

"There is no heavy work in agriculture?" said Father Sturm to Anthony, with an inquiring look.

"It is not easy," answered Anthony; "there is more to learn than in our business."

"To learn! the more he learns the better; that does not signify; what I mean is, if there is real heavy work."

"No," said Pix, who understood the giant better than Anthony, "there is no heavy work, the heaviest is a sack of wheat, which is one hundred and eighty pounds, or beans two hundred pounds weight, and that will not be his business; the plough-boys do that."

"If that is all that has to be done in farming," said Sturm, raising himself up contemptuously, "I don't care whether he lifts or not; any dwarf can carry two hundred pounds."

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## CHAPTER XV.

ANTHONY was now the most punctual clerk in the office. He gave up in a great measure the aristocratic accomplishments of his friend: it was only occasionally that Fink induced him to accompany him on a Sunday on horseback, or to pistol practice; on the other hand, Anthony used Fink's library more than he did himself. With some difficulty he had succeeded in penetrating the mysteries of the English pronunciation, and eagerly sought for opportunities of practising his talent for languages with Fink, but as the latter was, unfortunately, a very irregular and careless teacher, Anthony took lessons from a well-educated Englishman.

One day when he was sitting in the office, the door opened, and he recognized, with the greatest surprise, Veitel Itzig, his old school companion; he had hitherto but rarely met him, the lad's important manners and his fear of the familiarity with which he would probably address him, had led him to turn his eyes the other way, whenever he caught sight of Veitel's nose in the crowd. He was still more astonished when Veitel, in answer to Herr Specht's customary inquiry, "What is your pleasure?" said that he wished to speak to Herr Wohlfart.

Anthony left his seat and went into the middle of the office, and Veitel addressed him: "You know me, I am sure, though you have often passed me without notice."

"How are you, Itzig?" said Anthony, coldly.

"Only indifferently," answered he, shrugging his shoulders, "business does not prosper. I have a letter to give you from Herr Ehrenthal's son, and to ask you at what time Bernhard can call upon you."

"Upon me?" said Anthony, and he took the card and note from Veitel's hands. The letter was from Anthony's English master, inquiring if he would join in a course of reading with young Herr Ehrenthal, who wished to go through the old English writers in their literary sequence.

"Where does Bernhard Ehrenthal live?" asked Anthony.

"With his father," replied Veitel, with a grimace; "he sits the whole day in his room."

"I will call on him," said Anthony.

"Good morning, Herr Anthony."

"Good morning, Itzig."

Anthony felt no great inclination to enter into the proposal of his teacher. The name of Ehrenthal had no good repute in his office, and Itzig's appearance did not make the offer more agreeable to him. But the ironical way in which Itzig spoke of his employer's son, and some things he had heard of Bernhard, moved him at least to consider the matter. So a few days later, after the close of the office, he went in

search of Ehrenthal's house, resolved to decide according to the impression the son should make on him.

He came to the varnished door, pulled the big china bell-handle, and was shown by a coarse-looking kitchen-maid, without further ceremony, into young Ehrenthal's room. It was a long narrow room with old furniture and plain bookshelves, on which a great number of books large and small were lying in confusion. Bernhard was sitting at his desk poring over his work, and Anthony was already in the room before he looked up. He hurriedly fastened up his dressing-gown, and went to meet his visitor with the shy manner usual to short-sighted people. His figure was slight and his features delicate: he had curly auburn hair and grey eyes with an amiable expression. Bernhard motioned to his visitor to sit down on a small sofa. Anthony mentioned the object of his visit. Bernhard answered shyly that he would in all respects conform himself to his wishes, and, to Anthony's surprise, when he inquired about the price of the lessons, Ehrenthal's son said, with some confusion: "I do not know yet, but if you insist upon paying for the lessons, I will inquire." Upon hearing this, Anthony could not help asking, "Are you not in your father's office?"

"Oh no," said Bernhard, "I have been to the university, and as it is not easy for a young man of my creed to obtain a situation under government, and as I can live at home, I occupy myself with my books." On saying this he cast a look of affection on his bookshelves, rose up and approached them as if he would have introduced them to his guest. Anthony read some of the gilt titles, and said, with a bow, "They are too learned for me, they are Oriental works."

"The Hebrew leads to other Asiatic languages," said Bernhard, smiling; "there is much strange beauty in these languages, and in the poetry of ancient times. I have manuscripts also, if it would interest you to see them."

He opened a drawer and took out a parcel of strange-looking writings; with sparkling eyes he unfolded the upper one, which was covered with green silk interwoven with gold. He gave it to Anthony to look at, and was pleased when he declared that he could not tell even to what language the letters belonged.

"It is Arabic; but, indeed, this writing is difficult to read. Here is my favourite poet, Ferdosi. I possess only a small fragment of his poem in manuscript."

Anthony said, "It requires much learning to understand all that."

"Only a little patience," replied Bernhard, modestly. "Whoever has a heart for the beautiful will find it everywhere, even under the strange garb worn by the poets of the East. I am busy with a translation of Persian poems. Some day when you are at leisure, if it did not weary you, I would read you a short specimen."

Anthony begged him to do so immediately. Young Ehrenthal took a paper from his desk, and read a short love song. It was one of those innumerable songs in which a wine-drinker compares his love to everything that is beautiful—to plants, animals, all the planets, and even to the sun itself—and contrives, at the same time, to give a rap to the priests. The high-flown and flowery form and expression of the poem, struck honest Anthony very much, but it appeared to him strange when the reader exclaimed, "Is it not beautiful—the thought, I

mean? I cannot render the beauty of the language in German; I am not up to it."

As he said these words, he gazed upwards in ecstasy, like a man who every day drank his five or six bottles of shiras, and kissed his Zuleika every evening.

"But is it necessary to drink to be in love?" said Anthony. "It is possible with us, without wine."

"With us," answered Bernhard, "life is insipid,"

"I think not," answered Anthony, eagerly. "I know little of life, but yet I see that we, too, have sunshine, and roses, and happiness, in our existence, violent passions, and extraordinary destinies, which are celebrated by our poets."

"The present times," replied Bernhard, "are too cold and monotonous."

"I have read so in books, but I cannot understand why it is, and do not believe it. I fancy that those who are discontented with our life would be more so with that of Teheran or Calcutta, if they lived there long. It must be much more monotonous and tiresome than ours, from the descriptions I have read in travels. What charms the traveller is the novelty; when that ceases, and it becomes every-day life, it would appear very different."

"How poor in grand impressions is our civilized life!" answered Bernhard. "You must often feel it in your occupation, it is so prosaic."

"I do not agree with that. I cannot conceive anything more interesting than commerce. We live in the midst of a varied web of innumerable threads, spun from one individual to another, spreading over land and sea, from continent to continent, attaching each person to the whole world. All that we wear, and all that surrounds us, connects us with the most remarkable facts of foreign countries, and with every kind of industry, and thereby everything becomes interesting. I feel that I am helping, in however small a degree, to the preservation of the connexion between all mankind, and therefore I take pleasure in my occupation. When I place a bag of coffee in the scales, I weave an invisible thread between the daughter of the Brazilian colonist who plucked the berries and the young peasant who drinks them for his breakfast; and when I take a roll of cinnamon in my hand, I see on one side the cowering Malay who prepares and packs it, and on the other, the old woman of our suburbs who grates it over her rice cakes."

"You have a lively imagination, and are happy in the usefulness of your work; but the most sublime subject for poetry—a life rich with noble sentiments and actions—is seldom to be met with in our day; for that one has to go, like the English poet, among pirates, and the denizens of uncivilized lands."

"You are wrong," replied Anthony. "The merchant has as much scope for noble sentiments and deeds as any Arab or Indian chief. The more extended his business is, the more opportunities he has of sympathizing in the happiness or misfortune of others. A great house has lately become bankrupt."

"I know it," said Bernhard; "it was a sad case."

"If you had felt the oppression before the storm broke, the dreadful despair of the man, the grief of the family, the magnanimity of

his wife, who gave up her own fortune to the last penny to save her husband's honour, you would not say that our occupation is poor in passions or deep feelings."

"You are with all your heart a merchant. I feel almost inclined to envy you the pure pleasure you find in your work."

"But the merchant has also his sad experiences; he meets with much that is mean and despicable, and has many other causes of irritation; yet commerce is, on the whole, based on the honesty and goodness of human nature. Whoever carries on an honourable business cannot take a low estimate of life; he will always be able to find in it something beautiful and noble."

Bernhard had listened with downcast eyes; he now gazed silently out of the window; and Anthony remarked that he looked embarrassed and sorrowful. At length Bernhard turned and said, "If it suits you, Herr Wohlfart, I should like to go at once to our teacher. It is a long way off; we can talk in the open air."

Like old acquaintances, the two young men left the gloomy house together, and stepped out into the pure, warm evening air; and when they parted, an hour later, Bernhard said, pressingly, "If you do not find my society too wearisome, pray come to see me sometimes in your leisure hours." Anthony promised he would. They had both been pleased with each other, but Anthony could not help still wondering how a son of Ehrenthal could be so little of a commercial man, and Bernhard was delighted to meet with one to whom he could speak of many things which hitherto he had been obliged to keep to himself.

In the evening, Bernhard joined the family party in the sitting-room in a happy frame of mind, and placed himself behind his sister, who was practising a new fashionable piece on a costly piano, and displayed great execution. The brother kissed her cheek gently; she turned sharply round and exclaimed, "Leave me alone, Bernhard, I must practise my piece, for next Sunday there is to be a great soirée, and they will ask me to play."

"I know they will ask you," said the mother, while Bernhard sat silently down on the sofa, and took up an open book. "There is no party where they do not desire to hear Rosalie. If you could but resolve on coming with us, Bernhard! you have so much talent, and you are more learned than all the rest of the society. Professor Starke, of the University, has lately spoken of you with the greatest esteem, saying you would become an ornament to science. It is a pleasure to a mother to feel proud of her children. Why will you not appear at this party? It will be as select as any in the town."

"You know, mother, I do not like to go among strangers."

"And I choose that my son Bernhard shall do what he likes," shouted out the father from the next room, who had heard Bernhard's last words, as at this moment Rosalie was resting from her difficult passages. Herr Ehrenthal joined the family party in his faded dressing-gown. "Our Bernhard is not like other people, and the course he takes will always be the right one. You look so pale," he said to his son, passing his hand over his brown curls; "you study too much, my son. Think of your health; your doctor says that exercise is necessary for you, and has advised you to get a horse and ride. Why

will you not have one? I can afford to give my son the most expensive horse in the town. Do what the physician tells you, my Bernhard. I will buy you a horse."

"Thank you, my dear father; it would be no pleasure to me, and therefore, I fear, be of no use." He pressed his father's hand gratefully, who looked sorrowfully at the lines in his son's face.

"I hope you always give Bernhard what he likes to eat? Get peaches for him, Sidoni; the fruiterer has just got some fresh ones—they cost two groschen and a half each; or would you prefer something else? Tell me. You shall have what you like; you are a good son, and my delight."

"He never will take anything," interposed the mother; "he cares for nothing but his books; he often does not ask for Rosalie or me the whole day long."

"Dear mother," said Bernhard, imploringly.

"He reads too much, and cares too little about his fellow-creatures," she continued; "that is the reason he looks so pale and pining, like a man of sixty. Why won't he go to the party next Sunday?"

"I will go if you wish it," he said, sadly; and after a while he added, "Do you know a young man named Herr Wohlfart, who is in Schroeter's house?"

"I do not know him," said the father, shaking his head.

"Perhaps you do, Rosalie? He is a handsome young man, of gentlemanlike appearance. He appears to be a good dancer and agreeable companion. Have you not met him anywhere? I thought you must have been struck by him."

"Is he fair?" inquired the sister, smoothing her hair before a little hand mirror.

"He has dark hair and blue eyes."

"If he is in the office, I should probably not know him," said Rosalie, tossing back her head.

"Our Rosalie dances generally with officers and artists," explained the mother.

"He is a clever and amiable young man. I am going to read English with him. I am very glad to have made his acquaintance."

"He must be asked here," said Herr Ehrenthal, authoritatively, rising from the sofa; "if he pleases our Bernhard, he is welcome to my house. Have a good dinner next Sunday, Sidoni, and invite Herr Wohlfart, not at one o'clock, but at two. Henceforth he shall be asked to all our parties, for if he is a friend of Bernhard's he must be a friend of the family."

"He has not yet paid us a visit," replied the mother; "he must wait till he has been regularly introduced."

"What is the use of introduction?" the father burst out; "if he is acquainted with our Bernhard, what need is there of anything more?"

The mother gave her consent, and Rosalie sat down by her brother, and questioned him with somewhat greater interest about the looks and character of his new friend.

Bernhard described with warmth the agreeable impression Anthony had made upon him, whereupon his mother thought of getting out the great silver vase, and having it cleaned for next Sunday, and Rosalie began to consider what dress she should wear,



and which of her accomplishments she should display, to make an impression on the stranger, and the father declared repeatedly that he wished to see Herr Wohlfart at any hour in the day, and to have an exquisite dinner for him.

How was it that Bernhard did not impart to his family the subject of the conversation which had made his new acquaintance so dear to him? how was it that he soon after relapsed into a gloomy silence, and returned to his library? that when there, he bent his head over an old manuscript, and stared long at the crabbed characters, until big tears dropped down, which mingling with the ink marred, without his noticing it, the characters he so much valued. How was it that the young man, of whom his mother was so proud, and whom his father so adored, sat alone in his room, shedding the bitterest tears that a good man can shed? And how did it happen, that at last he composed himself, and, late in the evening, his eyes red with weeping, pored eagerly over his books, while his beautiful sister, in another part of the house, was running her fingers over the keys, practising the difficult piece destined to make an effect at the coming party?

The intercourse which commenced on that day between Anthony and Bernhard was useful to both. While conversing over the beauties which flowed from the pen of the mighty genius of a foreign nation, they learned to appreciate each other's good qualities, and it was a source of great enjoyment to them. Bernhard's knowledge of languages was greater than that of Anthony, and his feeling for the charms of foreign poetry was refined almost to excess; Anthony's mind was more sound and well regulated. When Bernhard contended in favour of Byron, Anthony defended the quiet perspicuity of Walter Scott, and it gave them pleasure that they could agree in admiration of the great dramatic poet.

Anthony described to Fink the extraordinary cultivation of Bernhard's mind. He rejoiced in the idea of making them acquainted, and one day when he had invited the latter to pay him a visit he asked Fink to come to him also.

"If it will give you any pleasure, Tony," said Fink, shrugging up his shoulders, "I will come. But I tell you beforehand, that of all living creatures a book-worm is what I can least tolerate. There are no people who judge more self-sufficiently upon all subjects, and none that behave more foolishly, when they have anything to do themselves. And especially a son of the worthy Ehrenthal! Do not take it ill if I run away from you soon."

Bernhard was sitting in suspense on Anthony's sofa, shyly awaiting the arrival of the renowned gentleman, many a story about whom had found its way even to his quiet study; when Fink entered and returned Bernhard's low bow with a careless nod, and drawing his chair near the table, wished to insist that the tea, which at Bernhard's request had been made weak, should be strengthened so as to be made drinkable, Anthony felt with much sorrow that the two would never suit. There could not possibly be two beings more opposite. The thin transparent hand of Bernhard and the powerful muscular one of Fink, the stooping carriage of the one and the elastic strength of the other, here the withered face and dreaming eye, there the proud features

with the look of an eagle: they could never do together. However, they went on better than Anthony expected. Bernhard listened to Fink's stories, and Anthony took pains to keep the conversation flowing by turning it to subjects in which Bernhard could take a part.

"Fink has seen Indians," said Anthony.

"Did you hear any of their songs?" inquired the scholar.

"I have heard them sometimes. It is possible that cleverer people than I may find something edifying in them, to me they appear miserable. Open an old book, and sing its contents through the nose, with all kinds of accessory tones: Tum tum te—tide, tide, te—Och, och, tum, tum, te—and you have the whole song, which means about as much as this: Good Spirit, give us buffaloes, buffaloes, buffaloes—give us big buffaloes, Good Spirit."—His auditors laughed,—*"And why should these creatures have more elevated songs? they are either hunting, or searching for scalps, or eating and sleeping, or making parliamentary speeches, for which they have a great taste."*

"But the women?" asked Bernhard, smiling.

"I know nothing of their poetry, they smelt too much of grease to please me; one gets accustomed to it at last, but it is pleasanter to deal with the men. One of those naked fellows on a half-wild horse is a fine sight."

"Their picturesque dress and proud bearing must be very striking on first meeting them," said Bernhard.

"I cannot say that," replied Fink. "Years ago I visited the station of a fur company in which we had a share. When we left the steamer, we found a party of these red gentlemen who were very tipsy. One of these scoundrels delivered us a speech, which, according to the interpreter, conveyed the assurance that they were all great warriors, and after each sentence, they all howled out a refrain of *hou, hou*, which, in their language, means yes. It was a party of Blackfeet."

"They were Sioux," said Bernhard, modestly, correcting him.

Fink put his teaspoon down, and stared at Bernhard.

"I calculate, sir, they were Blackfeet."

"They were Sioux, however," replied Bernhard; "with the Blackfeet the 'yes' sounds differently."

"Zounds!" exclaimed Fink, as you are so familiar with those red devils, why do you let me tell my hunting tales?"

"I have only taken some interest in their language," said Bernhard, "and, by accident, I have lately perused a list of words of sundry tribes."

"And why have you taken this useless trouble? they will soon cease, for before you can learn a language the tribe is destroyed."

Bernhard now became eloquent. He said that the knowledge of languages was the best means of acquiring an insight into the character and genius of nations, which is the highest of all studies.

The men of commerce listened attentively. When Bernhard was gone, Fink, still lost in astonishment, exclaimed, "He deals with the gods as if they were his companions! At first he seemed as if he could not distinguish right from left."

The result of this evening was, that Bernhard, some days later,

was seated in Fink's easy-chair, and he even took courage to invite Fink to come with Anthony to his room. "It is no party," he added, "only it will give me pleasure to see you both."

Fink accepted.

Thereupon there was great excitement in the Ehrenthal family. Bernhard dusted his books himself, and arranged them, and for the first time took an interest in the housekeeping. "We must have tea, supper, wine, and cigars."

"Don't trouble yourself about anything," the mother said; "if Herr von Fink is your guest, he shall see how we live."

"I will buy the cigars," exclaimed the father, "such as the young gentlemen like—something superior. I will also take care of the wine. Get some pheasants, Sidoni."

"We must hire a servant," said the mother.

"That is not what I intended," said Bernhard; "the gentlemen are paying me a visit as my friends, and I wish to receive them in my room without ceremony."

When the hour of the visit approached, Bernhard became quite active, and even lost his temper: nothing was ready. "Where is the tea-kettle? there is no kettle in my room," he called to his mother.

"I shall make the tea and send it in, as is the fashion at gentlemen's parties," said the mother, who was rustling about in a new silk dress.

"No," cried Bernhard, obstinately, "I will make the tea myself, as Wohlfart and Herr von Fink do."

"Bernhard is going to make the tea himself!" called out his mother to Rosalie.

"A miracle! he is going to make the tea himself!" echoed Ehrenthal, from his bed-room.

"He is going to make the tea himself!" called out the kitchen-maid, clapping her hands.

Again Bernhard rushed into the sitting-room with a decanter in his hand. "What is this?" he asked, hurriedly.

"Arrack," said the mother.

"It must be rum; Fink does not drink arrack in his tea."

"I will go myself and fetch some rum." Ehrenthal seized the bottle, and ran to his neighbour, Goldstein, the wine-merchant.

On their way there, Anthony said to Fink, "It is very good of you, Fritz, to come with me, it will give Bernhard great pleasure."

"One must victimize oneself sometimes. I have taken the liberty of supping beforehand, for I have an aversion to goose fat. But the beauty of the daughter is worth giving up something for. I saw her the other day at a concert; a splendid figure, and such eyes! her father, the old usurer, has never had a jewel in his hands that glittered like them."

"We are invited to visit Bernhard," replied Anthony, reproachfully.

"At all events, the sister will be visible; if not, we will compel him to produce her."

"I hope she will not be visible," said Anthony, with a sigh.

The door opened; the hall was lighted with two magnificent lamps, and Bernhard's room was festively adorned with a large vase of flowers and some pieces of china. On the table, which had a beautiful silk

cover, lay some gilt spoons and a large bundle of imperials of gigantic size. A new carpet was spread over the floor, everything was in keeping, and Bernhard was charming as host. He made the tea, but with touching helplessness asked Fink's advice how much he should put in, and turned the cock of the urn so cleverly that not a drop would come, and afterwards the rush of water could not be stopped. Blushing, he joked about his own awkwardness, and his eyes beamed with pleasure when Fink pronounced the tea exquisite. He pressed the cigars upon them, and listened with deference to the lecture Fink gave him on the proper dimensions which that product of human sagacity ought to assume. He became quite happy when Anthony at last begged him to show his friend his precious books, and Fink made humorous remarks on the appearance of the strange characters. The three sat cosily together, and chattered away for an hour in perfect harmony. Fink was in the best of moods, and Anthony prayed to the gods to keep the beautiful sister that night from the supper-table.

But precisely at nine o'clock the door of the next room opened, and Frau Sidoni crossed the threshold majestically. "Bathsheba comes to King David," whispered Fink to Anthony, who trod on his toes angrily. Bernhard, in an embarrassed manner, introduced the lady of the house, who begged them to come to the next room, where Herr Ehrenthal and Rosalie made their appearance. Fink approached the fair maid, and addressing her as the Lady Rosalie, told her that he had only to renew a former acquaintance, having seen her already at the Academy. He placed himself at table between the mother and daughter, and enchanted them both by paying them innumerable compliments in the most careless tone: with Rosalie he entered into a lively discussion on music, of which he formerly had been rather fond. He promised her a good place on the balcony at the next races, and related little anecdotes of the high society, taking off its foibles with much wit. This delighted the ladies, who looked with jealousy on circles that were so hermetically shut to people as refined as themselves. It pleased Bernhard also, who listened to these accounts as news from an unknown world. The conversation turned on a princess who passed for a great beauty; Fink had been once presented to her, and discovered that she resembled the young lady by his side so much, that she might be mistaken for her; the princess was a little shorter, and her air less noble. He admired a mosaic brooch on Frau Sidoni's neck, and compared it to a precious work of art he had seen in a museum. All this time Fink seemed perfectly unconscious of the existence of old Ehrenthal. After the first greeting with Anthony, the money-lender made some hopeless attempts to enter into conversation with Fink; but Fink spoke across him, as if there was nothing but thin air on the chair of the master of the house; and yet he was not uncivil—it gave every one the impression that it was the natural course of things. And Ehrenthal himself acquiesced humbly in the modest part he was condemned to, and took his revenge by devouring a whole pheasant.

When the conversation with the ladies began to flag, Fink commenced playing with words after his fashion.

The mother complained of Bernhard's sedentary habits.

"He is an aristocrat," answered Fink, good-naturedly. "Everyone is not to his taste; all learned people have that peculiarity. If I am

thankful for anything it is that I am only a plain modest man, whose head is not strong enough to bear much learning. We common-place men find little difficulty in getting through the world. We are forced to accommodate ourselves to those we meet; but those who have greater pretensions on account of their knowledge or beauty"—here he bowed to the daughter of the house—"do not find the world as easy to live with as they desire, while I and those like me think it perfection."

"There is so much vulgarity in the world," said Madame Ehrenthal.

"Not that I know of," said Fink, laughing. "I grant you some insects have a vulgar character, and it is vulgar to get drunk; for the rest much depends on individual views. Look at that oyster. I would bet that there are numberless fishes and terrestrial creatures who consider the sweet little creature vulgar, while to me it appears one of the most perfect creatures of nature. What do we call being distinguished? The oyster has all the necessary qualifications. It is quiet and calm, sits firmly in its proper place, and shuts itself up from the rest of the world, as no other creature does. When it shuts up its shell it shows in the most decided way that it is at home to no one; and when it opens its mother-of-pearl house it manifests a tender and feeling character to its equals. If man has a right to envy any living creature, it is an oyster. You will say that sea-water is not a very agreeable element, but that I must contradict. Any one who can give up the bad habit of gasping for breath every minute, as we unhappily are obliged to do, must find it delicious down at the bottom of the sea." He turned to Rosalie. "Only the musical cultivation of the oyster is, I fear, unsatisfactory. Save the howling of the storm, and the rattling of the steam-boats, no music penetrates to its domicile."

"Are you musical?" asked Rosalie.

"I can scarcely venture to say that," answered Fink. "I jingle a little on the pianoforte, and when I try to sing I shun the abodes of men; but I stand towards music in the position of an unhappy lover. There is an instrument that I adore passionately, and I would give much if I could play it well."

"The violin?" inquired Rosalie.

"I beg your pardon—the kettle-drum. I ask you, what use there is in playing on any other instrument. It is an eternal rushing from the heights to the depths, and *vice versâ*—an uncomfortable effort in all kinds of measures, trills, tremolos, triolines, and whatever else those tortures may be called. But you seldom have a long, big, quiet note—a solid sound which vibrates to its natural end, and is not trod upon by its successor. Now, on the other hand, take the tone of the kettle-drum: what power, what solemnity, what effect! How happy, then, the man to whom such an instrument is confided. Other virtuosos are said to be irritable and touchy! the kettle-drum becomes a hero, a great character; he acquires a philosophy of the highest grade; he pauses for thirty or forty measures, while the others run about pell-mell like mice when the cat's away: he alone stands in solitary grandeur, apparently occupied with nothing; he perhaps takes a pinch of snuff, or looks about smiling for the prettiest lady in the hall; he then soliloquises thus: 27—only wait, you shabby lot, 28—I shall knock you on the head soon, 29—that violin is a malapert, 30—Bom; he strikes, and the other instruments shrink together agi-

tated; they feel the language of their lord and master, and all the auditors take a deep breath; the great word has been uttered." Rosalie laughed.

I shall shortly have a pair of kettle-drums, and will do myself the honour of composing a duet for the pianoforte and drum, which I will dedicate to you—a sentimental nocturno. By Jove! what exquisite wine! From what country? I have not yet the honour of being acquainted with it."

"It is Hungarian—old Menes," called out Ehrenthal, across the table. "It has been lying in the cellar fifty years."

"Do you know this sort of wine, Herr Bernhard?" asked Fink, pretending not to hear the father's words.

"I understand very little about wine," said Bernhard.

"What a pity! A lover of poetry like you ought to prize his wine-cellar. But speaking of music, you should at least tell us how your Persian friends Jussuf and Sadi used to sing to their black-eyed beauties. Pray recite some poem in the Persian style."

Bernhard took pains to explain that the oriental music would sound strange to our ears, and had much to do to evade Fink's pressing entreaties to let him hear a recital in the original tongue and tune.

In this way Fink prolonged the supper till after midnight, and finally obliged Rosalie to sit down to the piano, then ran his fingers over the keys, and sang a wild Spanish air. When the guests retired the family were in raptures with him. Rosalie hurried back to the piano, and endeavoured to recall the air of the foreign street song. The mother was inexhaustible in her praises of his distinguished manners, and the father also, erased though he had been from the list of human beings, was enchanted with the visit of the rich heir, and in that pleasant humour into which wine puts men—declared he was worth more than a million. Even Bernhard's artless mind was powerfully laid hold of by this clever man of the world; he had, indeed, sometimes felt dissatisfied at Fink's way of talking, and it had struck him that he was making game of him and his family, but he was too inexperienced to penetrate this thoroughly, and quieted himself with the idea that it was the style of fashionable life.

Anthony alone was thoroughly discontented with his friend, and told him so on his way home.

"You sat there like a stick," replied Fink, "I amused the people, what would you have more? Transform yourself into a mouse, and creep into one of the holes of that smart room, and you will hear how they are singing my praises; nobody can wish for more than to be treated in a way that gives them pleasure."

"I think," said Anthony, "that we ought to treat people in a way that becomes us as gentlemen. You have acted like a frivolous aristocrat, who wants to borrow money of old Ehrenthal to-morrow morning.

"I will be frivolous," exclaimed Fink, merrily, "and perhaps I may also borrow money of the firm of Ehrenthal. Hold your tongue with your Lent sermon, it is past one."

Some days later, Anthony remembered, at the close of the office, that he had promised to send the young scholar a book. Fink had

already left an hour before, and, as he often did, had taken Anthony's great-coat, so Anthony wrapped himself up in Fink's cloak, which he had left in his room, and went to Ehrenthal's. He walked up to the white door, and was not a little surprised when it opened noiselessly, and a veiled figure appeared, a soft hand was laid on his arm, and a gentle voice said, "Come, be quick, I have waited for you long." Anthony recognized Rosalie's voice, and he stood like a statue, and at length answered, in a tone of astonishment which was pardonable in such a situation, "You mistake me for another, Fraulein Rosalie." With a suppressed shriek, the young lady glided down the steps, and Anthony, scarcely less alarmed, entered Bernhard's room. In his confusion he had forgotten to take off the cloak, and now experienced the annoyance of being accosted by the short-sighted Bernhard as Herr von Fink. A horrible suspicion arose in his mind: he excused himself to Bernhard on the score of great hurry, and carried the unlucky cloak home directly, with a heart full of anger and sorrow. Could it be Fink that was expected by Ehrenthal's beautiful daughter for that confidential walk! The longer Anthony awaited his absent friend, the more his indignation increased. At last he heard Fink's step on the pavement of the court; he hastened down in the cloak, related shortly what had happened to him, and concluded with these words: "Observe, I wore your cloak, and it was dark, and I have strong suspicions that she took me for you, and that you have abused Bernhard's confidence."

"Ay, ay," said Fink, shaking his head, "see how quickly the virtuous are ready to throw stones at others. You are a child. There are more white cloaks in the town, how can you prove that it was mine which was expected? And then allow me to remark, that your own conduct in this adventure has not been very civil, nor decided, nor, indeed, anything less than awkward. Why did you not hand the young lady down the steps, and if the mistake could not be concealed, could you not say, 'Though I am not him whom you take me for, I am equally ready to die in your service,' and so on."

"You don't deceive me," replied Anthony, "I don't believe that you are telling me the truth. When I consider the whole thing, I cannot get rid of the suspicion that you were the person expected."

"You are a sly fox," said Fink, good-humouredly; "but you must allow that as a lady is in the case, I cannot do otherwise than deny. For look you, my son, if I was to make a confession to you, I should compromise the beautiful daughter of that respectable house."

"I fear, alas!" exclaimed Anthony, "that she feels herself compromised without this."

"Well," said Fink, calmly, "she will bear it."

"But, Fritz," cried Anthony, wringing his hands, "have you no feeling of the wrong you are doing to Bernhard? You lead the sister of an honourable and sensitive man into follies, which may be fatal to her. It is because his pure heart beats in an atmosphere which it can hardly bear, because he is so trusting, and so inexperienced, that I feel so bitterly the wrong you are doing."

"Therefore, you will do best to spare your friend's delicate feelings, and be silent about his sister."

"No," answered Anthony, angrily, "my duty towards Bernhard compels me to act otherwise. I must desire you at once to break off

your intercourse with Rosalie, whatever it may be, and to endeavour to see her only as the sister of my friend."

"Very fine," answered Fink, ironically; "but if I don't agree to it, what then, always taking for granted that I deny being the person expected."

"You do not consent to it," said Anthony, in great emotion; "I shall never forgive you; it is not merely a delicacy of feeling, but something worse."

"What is it, then, if you please?" asked Fink, coolly.

"It is wicked: it was already bad enough that you should take advantage of that girl's coquettish disposition, it is doubly bad that you should forget how you made her acquaintance—and that you should have no regard either for her brother or me."

"And let me tell you," said Fink, lighting the lamp of his tea-kettle, "that I by no means give you the right of lecturing me. I have no wish to quarrel with you, but I do not want to hear any more from you on this subject."

"Then I must leave you," said Anthony, "for it is impossible for me to talk upon anything else, so long as I have the impression that you are acting wickedly." He went to the door. "I leave you the choice of either breaking with Rosalie, or, what is painful to me to say, breaking with me. If you by to-morrow evening do not assure me that your intrigue is at an end, I shall go and speak to Rosalie's mother."

"Good night to you, silly Tony," said Fink.

Anthony left his frivolous friend; it was the first serious quarrel between them; he was very unhappy about Fink's frivolity, and till a late hour continued walking to and fro in his room. Considering how sensitive and innocent Bernhard was, he thought it undesirable to mention it to him, he feared it would wound him to the heart, and he suspected that he had little influence with his sister. Fink also was much put out by what had occurred; he drank his grog by himself, and thought more, perhaps, of Anthony's anger, than of the beautiful Rosalie's alarm.

The following day was a gloomy one for both. Generally, when Fink entered the office, he nodded to his friend, who for some time sat opposite him, and Anthony used to go up to him and inquire how he had passed the last night. That morning Anthony was sitting in his place silent, deeply engaged in writing a letter, when Fink took his seat opposite. They could not help seeing each other when they raised their eyes, but on this occasion they both tried to look as if there were an empty space before them. It was more difficult for Fink to ignore Anthony's presence than it had been Herr Ehrenthal's; and Anthony, who was not accustomed to overlook solid objects, was very unhappy when he had to look with an air of indifference to the right or left of Fink's head. In the middle of the day breakfast was brought into the office, then there was usually a short pause in the work, and the clerks rose from their places and assembled together. This day Anthony remained seated, as he wished to avoid coming in nearer contact with Fink. Everything seemed to combine to make this difficult. Schmiei Tinkes appeared in the office, and Fink had again a ludicrous scene with him. Everybody



looked at Fink and talked to him, and formerly Anthony had entered into the fun with his friend, now he stared straight before him, as if he was unaware of the presence of Tinkles. Herr Schroeter gave him an order, about which he had to ask for information from Fink. He had to address him several times, and then Fink gave him so short an answer, that he felt hurt, and his anger against the obdurate sinner burnt still more strongly. They used to enter the dinner-room together, and Fink regularly waited till Anthony fetched him. This day, Anthony did not come, and Fink entered with Herr Jordan, who asked with surprise, "Where is Wohlfart?" to which Fink replied, "I do not know."

The following day, Anthony could not resist looking up sometimes from his writing to regard the proud features of his former friend, and he felt how painful it would be to be estranged from one, to whom he was so much attached. But he remained firm; for even now, when his first anger had cooled, he felt that he could not have acted otherwise; and this conviction quieted him. He now no longer avoided looking at his lost friend. When Fink looked up he saw Anthony's eyes resting sorrowfully on him. This expression of pain disturbed his reckless friend more than his anger. He saw that Anthony was firm, and the balance-scale in which Rosalie sat went up. If Anthony, in his simplicity, went to Rosalie's mother, it would spoil the adventure. It is true that he cared very little for the anger of the mother, and Rosalie would have to manage her; but the thought of the innocent Bernhard made him uneasy, and, what was worse than all, his intimacy with Anthony would be destroyed for ever, if the latter spoke to any third person about the *liaison*. These reflections made him knit his brows.

Shortly before seven o'clock, a shadow fell upon Anthony's paper. Anthony looked up, and Fink silently handed a little note to him across the desk. The direction was to Rosalie. Anthony started up from his seat.

"I have written to her," said the other, with icy coldness, "as your friendship only leaves me the choice of either compromising the girl or giving up an interesting study of human nature. I must give up the latter. Here is the letter. I have no objection to your reading it—it is her dismissal."

Anthony took the letter from the delinquent's hand, sealed it hastily with the small seal of the office, and gave it to a servant to take directly to the post-office.

Thus the danger was past, but there remained a coolness between the allies; Fink was sulky, and Anthony could not forget what he considered as treason to his friend Bernhard—so Fink did not for some weeks take his tea with Anthony.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

THERE was one day in the year when the house of T. O. Schroeter gave itself up entirely to amusement—it was the anniversary of the reception of Herr Schroeter into the Firm as his father's partner. If it happened to fall on one of the week days, through the spite of the

almanac-makers (and you might bet six to one that they would play the Firm this trick), the feast was celebrated on the following Sunday. The festivities were not of an exciting nature; they were quiet and regular, and had a slight touch of business-like dignity about them. First, there was a grand dinner at the Principal's; afterwards, the company drove to a neighbouring village, near which the merchant had a country house, and where a number of public gardens and summer concerts formed an attraction to the townspeople. There they drank coffee and enjoyed the beauties of nature, and returned at the regular citizens' hour to the town.

This year the merchant celebrated the twenty-fifth jubilee of his entrance. Early in the morning, a deputation of the servants and packers presented their congratulations. At dinner, the colleagues assembled in their best attire—Herr Liebold in a new coat, which, like all the rest of his smart clothes, had for many years been worn for the first time at this festival.

After dinner, carriages came to the door to convey the company into the country. Herr Schroeter and Sabine entered the first carriage, and, as the aunt was absent, nursing a sick relative, he had to choose among the gentlemen who were thronging about the carriage, vying with each other in assisting Sabine to get in, for two to occupy the back seats of the state carriage. Fink being already on his horse, the Principal selected Herr Liebold and Herr Jordan. Both gentlemen bowed, and Liebold took his seat, with a solemn smile, opposite to Sabine; but his pleasure was not without a drawback—it was well known to his colleagues, and to himself best, that he could not bear sitting with his back to the horses. He had never aspired to places of honour—his whole life had been passed sitting backwards in Fortune's chariot; but in a commonplace carriage his whole nature revolted against the idea of not sitting in a dignified place in front. And now, on this day of all others, ill-luck would have it he must sit opposite to the adored lady of the house. How gladly would he have given up his place! but that was impossible. It was too great an honour to be refused, and a refusal might have been wrongly interpreted. So he sat there as a martyr, ready for the worst. In vain he tried to appear unconcerned, and to look out of the window at the houses and trees, men and dogs, that danced past him. This fearful dance, he knew, was only the beginning; he must therefore look straight before him; and as it would have been improper to stare in the young lady's face, he tried to look over her head. There was a smile on his lips, but his eyes looked dead, and his checks became pale—bloodless—ashy. Jordan looked at him, and could scarcely conceal a smile. This led Sabine to inquire anxiously, "Do you feel unwell, Herr Liebold?" As Liebold did not dare to turn his eyes from the sky, he fixed them on a quiet cloud, and muttered that he was quite well; but he said it with such an expression of dull despair on his countenance, that Sabine turned anxiously to Herr Jordan.

"He cannot bear sitting backwards," said the latter.

"Then we will change places," cried Sabine. Liebold, horrified, shook his head, and made all kinds of silent gestures, in order to show how shocked he was at such a proposition. "Pray, Herr Jordan, stop the coachman," said Sabine. The carriage stopped, and the young lady rose. "Quick, Herr Liebold!" she exclaimed. He still

continued to protest, but Jordan seized hold of him, and, before he knew what had happened to him, he found himself seated in front, and the young lady opposite to him, on the back seat. The expression of distress on his countenance disappeared, and a fine colour overspread his face; but in what a situation he was! What would the passers-by think of him, and of his position in the house? Strangers might take him for the lady's uncle; but those who knew her—and who did not know the beautiful Sabine Schroeter?—must entertain the strangest ideas. That they should suppose him to be betrothed was scarcely sufficient, for in that case he would not have ventured to sit in front. No! they would consider that he sat there as husband. The thought made him perspire through every pore; he looked humbly at the young lady, and in a low voice begged her pardon for the scandal he occasioned. Sabine replied by putting out her hand, and shaking his heartily. This so overpowered him with delight, that he was on the point of bending down boldly to kiss her hand, but at that very moment they drove past the book-keeper of Strumpf and Kniesohl, and Herr Liebold at once sat bolt upright. The mischief was done, and he and Sabine were the victims of a dreadful mistake. There was no use struggling against fate, so he sat beaming with bliss till the carriage stopped at the great *café* of the village. They descended; the gentlemen all crowded round the young lady, and were received with music on entering the beech alleys of the dressed garden, which this day were filled with the smart dresses of the townspeople.

Sabine seemed to float amidst a cloud of gentlemen. It is possible that this migratory court, would have given greater enjoyment to many another lady than to her; but at any rate it was a pleasant sight to see her hanging on her brother's arm going along the walks, surrounded and followed by a crowd of devoted gentlemen, all trying to show that they belonged to her, the sun of their system, especially on this day, when the Firm appeared *en masse* amidst the fashionable population of the town, and each of them had to act a part as members of that renowned house. Liebold had a perpetual smile on his countenance, which he tried to subdue on one side of his face, lest the passers-by should suppose that he was laughing at them; but the more he struggled, the more his feelings worked within him, and showed themselves sometimes during the most indifferent conversation, passing suddenly like a flash of lightning over his face, expanding his nostrils and mouth, and making his eye look small and bright. As the favoured occupier of the front seat, he carried the young lady's shawl, walked behind her at a fitting distance, and thus denoted the second line which the Firm occupied that day in the green ledger of nature. Herr Specht had by a bold stroke taken possession of the parasol, and kept hovering about Sabine, but in general led the column, like an ensign skirting a wood. With longing eyes he searched the underwood, to see whether there was a striking flower or a butterfly which might give him an excuse for beginning a conversation with the young lady; but that was not easy, as Fink walked by her side. The latter was maliciously disposed this day, and Sabine could not help laughing at his merciless quizzing of the striking figures they met in the walk. He even jested on the dignified march

of the collected Firm, though he himself did not think it beneath him to assume some of its exclusive pride.

Around them, in every direction, were pleasure-parties wandering to and fro: there was a perpetual greeting and avoiding one another: the merchant was constantly obliged to touch his hat, and as often as he did so the fourteen hats of the colleagues were also put in motion.

After they had been for some time in this way floating about in the stream, Sabine expressed a wish to rest, and immediately some of the gentlemen rushed out, like *tirailleurs*, among the ranges of benches and secured a table. They all sat down, and the waiters brought a huge coffee-pot with the requisite number of cups. It was a pleasure to see how all the gentlemen tried to save the young lady the trouble of pouring out the coffee, because the coffee-pot was too heavy for her; how Sabine chose Anthony for her aide-de-camp, on account of his performing the same office for his colleagues; how they rejoiced to find that so much was known concerning them in the upper house; how kindly Sabine offered them cake, and took care that the passage of the sugar-basin and cream-jug should never be interrupted; and, finally, how they all sipped the landlord's brown liquid with the air of connoisseurs. It was by no means a quiet place, and Sabine had much to do in greeting all her brother's acquaintance and friends as they stopped to accost her in passing by. Nothing could be more charming than her manner of performing all these duties; she talked with the gentlemen of the office in a tone of quiet, dignified kindness, and with simple cordiality rose to welcome those who came up to her. She had a civil word or joke for every one; observed the promenaders, and yet had time to preside at the coffee-table and examine the cups which she handed to Anthony. To both Anthony and Fink this composed manner seemed to become her, and the latter told her so. "If this is a day of recreation, Fraulein Sabine, I do not envy you your days of work. No princess at a drawing-room has so many to receive, so many bows to make, and so many smiles and civilities to distribute. It is admirably done—you must have rehearsed it. There comes the burgomaster himself to talk to you; how I pity you; you must use your ears to listen to me, your hand to hold Herr Liebold's cup, and your eyes to receive the dignitary respectfully. I am curious to know whether you are able to take in what I am saying."

"Only take the beetle out of your cup, and I will pour out some coffee for you directly," said Sabine, laughing, as she rose to greet an acquaintance.

Meanwhile Anthony amused himself with catching the remarks of the passers-by on their party. "There is Herr von Fink," whispered a young lady to her companion. "A good-looking face and a fine figure," muttered a lieutenant. "What is one fish amongst so many?" mumbled out a rake. "Be quiet, there are the Schroeters," said one clerk, joggling another. While Anthony was thus occupied in looking about him, he saw two tall figures approaching slowly—they were Madame Ehrenthal and her daughter. Rosalie was on the side near the table: her face gradually became crimson as she was pushed, by the pressure of the crowd, close to where Fink sat. Anthony looked anxiously at Fink, who, though in lively conversation with Sabine, had sufficient use of his eyes to perceive who were

approaching. Anthony rose to greet them, while the intrepid Fink only carelessly touched his hat, and looked as coolly on the two ladies as if he had never admired the bracelet on the arm of the beautiful Rosalie. The fact of Anthony greeting Rosalie, her striking beauty, and perhaps something remarkable in her toilet, occasioned Sabine to look attentively at the two ladies.

Ehrenthal's daughter did not notice Anthony's greeting; her dark eyes were fixed on Sabine: a look of hatred and rage flashed from them on the young girl whom she took for her fortunate rival, so that Sabine drew back quite alarmed, as from the assault of a wild animal. With compressed lips, and an expression of indescribable disgust on her features, Rosalie passed on. Fink's lip curled, and he shrugged his shoulders slightly. When the ladies had passed, Sabine turned with a look of surprise to Anthony and Fink, and inquired who they were.

"Some of Anthony's acquaintance," said Fink, jeeringly.

"Madame Ehrenthal and her daughter," answered Anthony, embarrassed: "the young lady is sister to the scholar of whom I spoke the other day." While saying this he involuntarily looked at Fink, and they exchanged angry glances.

Sabine remained silent, and leant back in her chair. Her gaiety was gone: the conversation languished; and when her brother returned from a visit to the next table, Sabine rose and invited the gentlemen to come to her garden. Again she walked along surrounded by them; but Fink was no longer by her side. That burning glance of hatred had withered the green tendrils which had again interwoven themselves between them. Sabine turned to Anthony and talked to him; she tried to be gay, but Anthony observed that there was constraint in her manner.

The merchant's pretty country-house, with its large garden and greenhouses, was Sabine's favourite resort. Both summer and winter she drove there whenever the weather permitted, and entered into all the details of the arrangement and cultivation of the flowers. The gentlemen overwhelmed her with questions about the names and species of her plants; and while her brother went with Fink to examine a contiguous piece of ground which was offered for sale, she showed the rest of the company what she had lately arranged; she led them among flowers and along turf-alleys to the hothouses. Her brother had made her a present of a palm-tree, which, with the broad-leaved plantain, the tropical ferns, and blooming cactus, formed a beautiful group; before them stood an ornamental table and seats. It was a delightful winter-garden. Whilst Sabine was telling them that she was in the habit of taking her coffee there on sunny winter days, and how pleasant it was to sit under the shade of the huge leaves, the gardener brought her some crumbs of cake and bird-seed on a plate: "Even when I have not so numerous a company as now, I am not alone," she said, smiling.

"Pray introduce us to the birds," exclaimed Anthony.

"You must go into the garden-house, then, and keep quite quiet: the little folk know me, but would be frightened at so many gentlemen."

The colleagues went into the house. Pix dragged the excited Specht away by the back buttons of his coat, and shut the glass door;

Sabine strewed the food on the gravel some steps from the door, and clapped her hands. The clapping was answered by confused cries from the neighbouring trees and the roof of the house. A crowd of little birds darted down, and hopped gaily, chirping in search of the crumbs; they were so tame that they came up to Sabine's feet. It was not a distinguished company, for there were nothing but finches, linnets, and a swarm of sparrows. Sabine went up to the door and asked, "Can you distinguish them one from another? However like they may appear to be, they are different, not only in their coats, but in their ways: several I know personally," and she pointed to a large sparrow, a fine cock with a black head and brown back, "he is my oldest acquaintance; he took to me first; he has grown fat on my cake; he walks amongst the others like a rich banker; his voice sounds aristocratic and disdainful; he considers my feeding him as a duty which the world owes him; there he is chirping again, do you know what he is saying? 'My cake girl is come, what I cannot eat I will leave to the others.' I think he has a trinket hanging from his little breast."

"It is a feather," whispered Herr Specht.

"Yes," continued Sabine; "I fear his wife has pulled it out, for, important as he looks, he is under petticoat government, and the grey one there, the lightest of all, is his wife, look at her pecking at him."

A lively quarrel arose among the sparrows; the banker was just biting a large piece of cake in a dignified manner, when he received several pecks from the beak of his wife; he remonstrated, neighbours came near, violent screaming ensued, and there was general indignation against the banker; he was expelled from the crowd, and his wife stood triumphantly over the conquered morsel.

The gentlemen laughed.

"There comes my darling, now look." A young sparrow waddled up awkwardly, with its wings spread, just as a child who had a difficulty in keeping its balance in a walk: it fluttered up to the wife, opened its beak widely, squeaked, and beat the ground with its wings. The mother broke a piece off the large bit of cake and put it into the beak of the little one; thus she fed it with the conquered bit, while the self-sufficient father was hopping about some steps off, casting suspicious glances on his energetic wife.

"How charming!" exclaimed Anthony.

"Is it not?" said Sabine; "amongst these little folks one may study character and family life."

But the scene was interrupted in a violent manner; a light step came up to the house, the birds fluttered away, and only the mother and child lingered. At last the mother flew up to the tree, and called anxiously to her child; but the little one, heavy with its meal, could not rise quick enough; a whisk of Fink's whip reached it, and it fell a corpse amongst the flowers. A burst of rage was heard from all the gentlemen, and dark looks were cast upon the murderer. Fink, who had not noticed the group at the door of the garden-house, gazed astonished at the storm that was raging against him. Sabine hastened past him to the bed where the bird was lying, took hold of it, and kissing its tiny head, said, with a sad voice, "It is dead." She sat down on a bench near the door, and covered the body with her handkerchief.

An uncomfortable silence followed. "It was Fraulein Sabine's favourite bird that you have slain," said Herr Jordan, reproachfully.

"I am sorry for it," Fink replied, moving a chair from the table. "I did not know, Fraulein, that you extended your sympathy to these little thieves. I acted to the best of my knowledge, and fancied that I should deserve the thanks of the house for getting rid of this little rogue."

"Poor little one!" said Sabine, sadly, "its mother is screaming on the tree. Do you hear her?"

"She'll console herself," answered Fink. "I think it needless to bestow more sentiment on a sparrow than its family does; but I know you look on all that is around you with affection and tenderness."

"If you have not that quality, why should you mock at it in others?" said Sabine, with quivering lips.

"Why?" asked Fink, "because I meet with that habit everywhere. This perpetual sentimentality which pervades all here is not worthy of being called feeling. It makes us weak and childish. Those whose feelings are excited by all kinds of trifles have none left when there is real occasion for them."

"And those," replied she, with a sorrowful look at Fink, "who never regard what surrounds them but with harsh coldness, will they not fail when feeling becomes a duty?"

"It would be rude in me not to concede that," said Fink, shrugging his shoulders; "at all events, it suits a man better to be too hard than too soft. Observe our people here," he continued, after an uncomfortable pause; "they love the copper kettle in which their mother boiled the sausages, a broken pipe, or threadbare coat, and are equally attached to the ten thousand rotten habits of their daily lives; they are all filled with fantastical whims, and fancies, and weak sentimentalities, which are a dead weight upon them when they ought to be acting vigorously. Look at the German emigrants: what useless things they drag with them over the water! old bird-cages, broken wooden chairs, worm-eaten tables, and trash like that. I knew a fellow who made an eight-day journey to eat sour krout; and when such a poor devil has settled himself, and after a year discovers that it is a fever swamp, he has so surrounded himself with sentimentality that it is often impossible to get him to leave the bog, although his wife and children are the victims. Therefore I like what you call the indifference of the American; he works like two Germans, but never falls in love with his cottage, fence, or team. What he possesses has just as much value in his eyes as can be expressed in dollars. Very vulgar, you will say, with disgust; but I appreciate the vulgarity which is every moment thinking how much or how little a thing is worth; and this vulgarity has created a powerful and free State. If the Germans had founded America, they would have been to this very day drinking chicory instead of coffee, under a tax imposed upon them by some sentimental government in Europe."

"And do you desire the same turn of mind in women?" asked Sabine.

"In the main, yes," replied Fink. "There is no German housewife that is not in love with her napkins; the more she has of these rags, the happier she is. I believe they value one another secretly, as

we do at the exchange, at five or eight hundred napkins' weight. The American woman is not worse than the German, because she would laugh at such sentiment. She has as many napkins as she wants for daily use, and buys new when the old are worn out. Why pin one's heart to such trifles, that may be bought in any street at from four to six thalers the dozen?"

"Oh, it is sad to resolve life into such calculations," returned Sabine. "Both what we gain and what we possess would lose its greatest ornament. Enrich the imagination, and the kind-heartedness that invests even lifeless objects with bright colours, and what would our life become? Nothing would remain but intoxicating enjoyment or the egoistical principle to which all is sacrificed. All pleasure in what one did, all faith and devotion, would be lost. Those who think so coldly may, perhaps, be capable of great actions, but their life will be neither beautiful, nor joyous, nor a blessing to others." Involuntarily she folded her hands, and cast a sorrowful look at Fink, whose countenance had assumed a daring and harsh expression.

The other gentlemen had hitherto listened to the discussion in gloomy silence, only occasionally manifesting their indignation at Fink's assertion by gestures. The ghost of the murdered sparrow rose before their eyes, it hovered over the table, and close to Fink's chair, and they stared on the Macbeth of the office as on a lost man. Anthony, anxious to smooth matters, now took up the word.

"Allow me to say that Fink himself is a brilliant example of the reverse of his own theory."

"How's that, sir?" asked Fink, looking askance at him.

"I will make it evident directly; but first I must pass a general commendation on our whole party. We, all here assembled, are workmen in a business which is not ours, and every one of us does his work in the German way you have just now condemned. It does not occur to any of us to think, I gain so many thalers from the Firm, therefore the Firm is worth so much to me. What is gained by the work in which we help gives us pleasure, and is a source of pride to us. And when the house suffers a loss, we are all of us vexed, perhaps even more than the Principal. When Herr Liebold writes his cyphers in the ledger, he looks at them with pleasure, and rejoices in his fine caligraphy, and when he puts down items which have been particularly advantageous to the Firm, he smiles with secret delight. Look there—just as he is doing now."

Liebold looked embarrassed, and pulled at his shirt collar.

"Then there is colleague Bauman, who has secretly another vocation. The other day he brought me a report on the horrors of paganism on the coast of Africa, and with deep emotion said, 'It is time, Wohlfart, that I should go.' 'But who can manage the calculations?' asked I; 'and what will become of the madder business, which you and Balbus keep so close, that no one else knows anything about it?' 'Indeed,' cried Bauman, 'I had not thought of the madder. I must wait a little longer.'"

The gentlemen looked smilingly at Bauman, who said in a low tone, "It was certainly wrong."

"And of the tyrant Pix I will by no means speak, as there are many hours when he is not quite sure whether the house belongs to him or Herr Schroeter."



All laughed, and Pix thrust his hand into his breast-pocket, like Napoleon.

"You are a perfidious advocate," said Fink; "you make it a matter of personal concern."

"You did the same," retorted Anthony. "And now I will speak of you. About six months ago this American went to Herr Schroeter, and said, 'I wish not to be a volunteer any longer. I beg that I may have a fixed position in the house.' 'Why?' inquired Herr Schroeter. Of course, Fink's only object was to pocket a certain number of thalers from the Firm!"

Again they all laughed, and looked at Fink, but their looks were no longer hostile; there was something in them of esteem and approbation, for all knew that Fink had said: "I wish for a regular share in the work and in the responsibility attached to a fixed occupation. I take pleasure in doing my branch of the business."

"And further," continued Anthony, "whoever has seen the way in which he deals with Tinkles, knows how much weak German feeling is to be found in him also. He has so much fun in his nature, that the whole office is at this moment delighted, and the best part of it is that Tinkles himself doats on him."

"Because he is ill-treated, sir?" interposed Fink.

"No, but because, lurking underneath your harsh language, he discerns the same kindness with which another caresses his dog or his bird. And when some enterprise of the Principal has met with brilliant success, none of us rejoices more than Fink. Lately, when a crisis in the zinc trade occurred, and Herr Schroeter, against the secret opinions of the whole office, Fink included, sold at Hamburg just at the right time, and the Firm was thereby saved from a loss of some thousand thalers, that identical Fink exulted more loudly than any of us, and compelled Jordan and myself to go that very evening with him to a tavern."

"Because I did not choose to drink alone, you simpleton," said Fink.

"Of course," cried Anthony; "therefore you drank the first glass to the well-being of the Firm, and called it a glorious Firm."

Fink cast his eyes down, and Sabine smiled brightly on Anthony. The gentlemen again became friendly and cheerful, and the slight discord was over.

Anthony went on victoriously: "In other things, too, he has somewhat of that wretched sentimentality which he assails so vigorously. We all know that he is fond of his horse: it is something more to him than the sum of five hundred dollars, represented by so many hundred weight of flesh covered with a hide. He cares for the animal as a friend."

"Because he gives me pleasure."

"Granted," said Anthony; "and the napkins give our housewives pleasure, it is just that. And his condor's wings, his pistols, whips, and rum-bottle, are all things that give him pleasure, as much as the bird-cage to the German emigrant; indeed he has more caprices and fancies than we have. In short, he is, in truth, as much a poor sentimental German as any of us."

Sabine shook her head, but looked kindly again on the American. Fink's countenance also had changed. He looked serious, and some-

thing shot across his proud features which in another you would have called emotion. "Well," he began at length, "the Fraulein and I have both of us been too one-sided." He pointed to the dead sparrow; "Before that sad spectacle I lay down my arms, and confess that I wish the little gentleman was still alive, and could reach a good old age, among the cherries and cakes of the Firm. So do not be angry with me any more, Fraulein."

Sabine nodded to him, and, with warmth, assured him she would not.

"And you, Anthony, give me your hand. You have pleaded brilliantly, and swindled a 'not guilty' from the German jury. Take your pen and strike out a fortnight from our journal; you understand me." Anthony pressed his hand, and laid his arm on Fink's shoulder.

The company were again in the best possible humour: Herr Schroeter joined them, cigars were lighted, and everyone endeavoured to be as agreeable as he could. Herr Liebold rose and begged permission of the Fraulein and the Principal for him and three of his colleagues to sing a quartet, if they had nothing better to propose this fine evening, in which case he humbly entreated that his words might be considered as not uttered. As for several years a similar proposal had regularly been made on that day, and all were prepared for it, Sabine said to him, "Of course, Herr Liebold; we should lose half our pleasure if we were to be deprived of our quartet." The singers fetched their music, and arranged themselves together; Specht was first tenor, Liebold second, Birnbaum and Balbus the two basses. These four formed the musical division of the office, and in spite of trifling bickerings, the result of their musical natures, they held to each other against all the others. Herr Specht crowed somewhat too loud, and Herr Liebold sang a little too low, but their auditors were grateful, and the evening was a splendid one. The large leaves of the nut trees glowed in the warm light of the setting sun, the grasshoppers chirped, the wild singers of the woods whistled their simple ditties, all nature seemed to pour forth melody, till the full strength of the human voices overpowered the more delicate notes of the garden. Then the birds, crickets, and gnats became silent, but whenever the singers ceased, the soft humming of nature was heard again as if in response. All listened with pleasure; "Thank you, thank you," exclaimed Sabine, clapping her hands when they finished.

"It is a curious thing," began Fink, "that a certain series of sounds move the heart and call forth tears, even from men who are dead to all other soft emotions. Every nation has its simple airs, and countrymen recognize each other by the impression these melodies make on them. When the emigrants of whom we were before speaking, lose everything, their love for their fatherland, and even the power of speaking their mother tongue fluently, the melodies of their home live with them longer than anything else, and many a fool who in a foreign country prides himself on being a naturalized foreigner, feels himself on a sudden a German again, on hearing a few measures sung that he had heard in his childhood."

"You are right," said the merchant; "those who leave their homes are seldom aware of how much they give up; they only find it out,

perhaps, later in life, when the remembrance of it becomes a pleasure to them. These remembrances are a sacred possession even to the most reckless, which they may sometimes sneer at, but in their better moments cling to."

"With some shame, I confess that I feel very little of this pleasure," said Fink. "I do not very well know where my home is. When I sum up the years of my life, I have passed, it is true, the greatest part of them in Germany, but all my strongest impressions have been in foreign countries. Fate has always torn me away, before I have taken root anywhere. And now in Germany I feel myself at times quite a stranger: the dialects of the provinces, for instance, are almost unintelligible to me. At Christmas I have always received more presents than were good for me, but the fascination of our German Christmas-trees has never touched me. Of the national songs you prize so much, only a few find an echo in my heart; to this day I am uncertain when one ought to eat carp, or hornback and poppy-cake; and I must confess myself deficient in enthusiasm for the charms of pouring the lead or hunting the slipper. And besides these trifles," he continued more seriously, "there are many other things in which I find myself wanting, and a stranger to German ways. I am aware that I have trespassed on the forbearance of my friends more than I ought. I have to thank your house," he concluded, bowing to the merchant, "for having made me acquainted with the more respectable side of the German character."

This was a manly confession, and he spoke the last words with an emotion he seldom displayed. Sabine was happy, the sparrow was forgotten, and she exclaimed, with a burst of feeling, "That was nobly spoken, Herr von Fink."

The servant announced supper: the table was laid in the dining-room of the garden-house. Herr Schroeter took his place in the middle, Sabine smiled as Fink took his seat next to her.

"Opposite to me, Herr Liebold," called out the Principal; "to-day I must see your faithful face in front of me; it is five-and-twenty years to-day since our connection began. Herr Liebold entered a few days before I became an associate with my father in the Firm, and to him, above all the members of the office, I owe my acknowledgments. Five-and-twenty years in the business, ten years at the ledger, always a trusty, worthy, faithful assistant;" he put out his glass across the table. "Drink with me, my old friend; as long as our chairs stand near each other, only separated by a thin partition, may the same relations subsist between us as heretofore—a firm confidence with few words."

Herr Liebold had listened to the speech of the Principal standing bolt upright, and remained in that position; he wished to propose someone's health, and all saw that; but he could not utter a word; he lifted his glass up and looked at the Principal, his lips moved, at last he sat down silently. Instead of him, to the astonishment of all, Fink rose, and said, in an earnest tone, "Drink with me to the prosperity of a German house where work is a pleasure and honour has a home. Hurrah for our office and for our Principal!"

A thundering hurrah from the colleagues, Sabine drank with them, and the Principal responded warmly to the feeling shown by Fink. The rest of the evening was passed in undisturbed enjoyment. The

quartet sang some gay drinking-songs, and it was long past ten before the company returned to the town.

At the foot of the staircase, Fink said to Anthony, "To-night, my boy, you dare not pass my room; I have been dull enough without you for so long." The reconciled friends sat together till a late hour, both endeavouring to show the other how happy they were in their reconciliation.

As Sabine entered her room the maid presented her with a note from an unknown hand. A strong smell of musk and the delicate writing showed it to be from a lady.

"Who brought the note?" asked Sabine.

"A stranger," answered the maid; "he would not mention his name, and said there was no answer."

Sabine read, "My Fraulein, do not exult too soon; you have by your coquetries allured a gentleman, who is in the habit of deceiving and forgetting those who have listened to his words, and treating them insolently; lately he made declarations to another, now he is making a fool of you; he will profess love for you, and then betray you."

The note had no signature; it was from Rosalie.

Sabine knew well who the writer was: she held the note to the candle and threw the burning paper into the grate; silently she saw the flickering flame lessen and become extinguished; she watched the glittering sparks as they danced about on the blackened ashes, until the last had died away. Long she stood there, leaning her head on the mantelpiece, gazing on the little heap without a tear, without a sound, pressing her hand to her throbbing heart.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

VEITEL ITZIG was in the greatest state of excitement; he, who was so sober, so abstemious, now resembled a drunkard in all his leisure hours; his lips moved in lively soliloquy, and a feverish crimson overspread his high cheek bones: in the streets, he might be known by his extraordinary manner of moving his hands and feet; a quiet sleep was a thing he only knew by name; and all this because the widow of a Geheimrath had lost her pet dog. The pug, seduced by the sunshine, or by the aroma of a butcher's-boy, had descended two flights of steps into the street, and had there disappeared, either drowned in the water, stolen by sharpers, or killed by banditti; in short, he was gone, and no newspaper advertisement could bring back the fat figure into the room in which he had so long reigned as a tyrant. The widow had fallen ill from sorrow at her loss, and Veitel took such a lively interest in her sufferings, that he was in danger of injuring his own health. Unhappily, Veitel's hopes were not placed on the life of the lady; he had ventured on a gigantic transaction, which he had undertaken after many discussions with his adviser Hippus, and after having often taken out his pocket-book in the dead of night to compute his fortune. The speculation was one of the finest that a man of Veitel's principles could enter upon; it was, perhaps, a little bold, but as clean as a baby under the bathing sponge.

A poor devil—proprietor of a manor and a bad manager—had been so cheated, that at last his estate was obliged to be sold by auction; by this sale a mortgage of ten thousand thalers was left unpaid: the creditor, whose demands were not covered by the proceeds of the sale, had in vain endeavoured to lay hold of the person of the ruined proprietor, the debtor had no effects, and the court found that nothing could be obtained from him: he was *frustra excussus*, as our lawyers term it, and experienced the miserable satisfaction of no longer fearing his creditors. This dubious happiness was, after a series of weary years, a kind of Greenland sunshine to him; the possessor of the mortgage looked woefully on his worthless document, which, under these circumstances, was of no more value than a piece of waste paper. This state of things came under the keen observation of Itzig; he was for a whole year in intimate connection with the former proprietor; he was kind enough to buy old coats from him, and even to lend him money, and thus became initiated into many little secrets of his disappointed life. He had also discovered that his customer did his best to get into the favour and the will of his old aunt; and Veitel came gradually to the conviction that he would succeed. He was obliged to expend two silk neck-handkerchiefs and a pair of gilt-ear-rings on the maid of the old lady, in order to obtain accurate information. The nephew read accounts of murders from the papers to his aunt; he was invited whenever she had a favourite dish made, and she talked of getting him married, but did not; and at last, when the love of life had been diminished by a four weeks' rain, she sent for her lawyer, drove her nephew (who was affected even to tears) out of the room, and by these extraordinary measures induced the maid-servant to listen at the door, who heard the old lady make her will, and mention her nephew honourably in it. When Veitel had found out thus much, he took the second great step, and purchased with four hundred thalers the mortgage from the holder of it, with all the rights against the person of the debtor.

Now the pug dog had vanished, the aunt lay fretting in bed, and died the week after, and the nephew succeeded to the greater portion of her inheritance. Veitel went through superhuman exertions to hinder his debtor from making away with his inheritance, by means of one of those little manoeuvres, all of which Veitel knew so well by experience; like a ghost he pursued the unhappy heir, who had scarcely enjoyed the first glimpse of his future happiness when Veitel stood before him, an unrelenting memorial of the past, and by the icy coldness of his demands, smothered the warm hopes that were beginning to rise in his breast. It was impossible to escape him; with iron grasp he held his debtor fast, and the law assisted him so energetically, that the heir was obliged at last to capitulate. With eight thousand thalers, the greater portion of his inheritance, he bought himself free from Veitel.

It was a happy day for our young money-dealer when he carried his great capital home in his pocket. He flew along the streets, and up the stairs to his own little room, quite wild with joy. The constraint he had long put upon himself to appear indifferent while his heart was all the time beating like a sledge-hammer with fear and suspense, had passed away; he was like a child, though not quite so inexperienced; he jumped about his room, and even laughed for joy, and asked

Hippus, who had been expecting him some hours, "Which sort of wine shall we drink, Hippus?"

"Wine alone will not do," replied Hippus, warily. "Yet it is a long time since I have tasted Hungarian wine. Get a bottle of old Upper Hungarian; or, stop, it is dark enough in the streets, I will fetch it myself."

"What does it cost?" exclaimed Veitel

"Two thalers," answered Hippus.

"That is much; but it is all the same—here they are." So saying, he dashed his hand into the pocket of his trousers, pulled out a couple of thalers, and flung them on the table.

"All right," Hippus nodded, and eagerly laid hold of the money. "But this will not do alone, my son: I claim a percentage on your gain. Considering that we are old acquaintances, and that it is not right to squeeze one's friends, I will be content with five per cent. on the capital you have received to-day."

Veitel stood aghast; his beaming countenance became at once very serious, and with open mouth he stared at the little black fellow on the sofa.

"Let's have no speechifying," continued Hippus, coolly, casting an evil glance at Veitel over his spectacles. "Do not attempt to say a word to me about your chaffering—we know each other. It is owing to me that you have been able to gain the money—to me alone. You want to make use of me, and you see I can make use of you. Give me at once four hundred out of your eight thousand."

Veitel tried to speak.

"Not a word," repeated Hippus, tapping the table with one of the pieces he held in his hand; "down with the money."

Veitel looked at him. At length he silently put his hand into his pocket, and laid two notes on the table before Hippus.

"Two more," continued Hippus, in the same tone. Veitel added another hundred. "And now the last, my son," said the old man, nodding encouragingly, and still tapping the table with the coin.

Veitel hesitated a moment, looking anxiously on the old man, in whom an infernal joy seemed to have been excited. There was no comfort to be read in that face. Again Veitel put his hand into his pocket, flung the fourth note on the table, and said, with a dull voice, "I have been deceived in you, Hippus;" then pulled out his handkerchief, blew his nose, and wiped his eyes.

Hippus took little notice of his pupil's sentimental mood: he handled the notes as one would a long-lost jewel which one has unexpectedly found. At last, pocketing his booty, he said, "When you reflect upon it calmly, you will perceive that I have acted towards you as a good friend. I might have demanded a great deal more."

Veitel still stood at the window, gazing into the darkness; he felt wretched. He had previously thought of the old man whilst on his way home from the notary, and had resolved upon doing something to please him. He had designed buying him a new silver snuff-box, and putting ten ducats into it. And now Hippus treated him in this way.

As he could not utter a word, for sorrow at the conduct of his master, Hippus rose, and said to him consolingly, "Don't take it to heart, you blockhead; if I should die before you, I shall make you my heir; then you will get the money back again if any of it is left. I

am going now to taste the wine, and will drink to your health, my sentimental Itzig." With these words the old man slipped out of the door.

Once more Veitel took his handkerchief and wiped away a bitter tear that stole down his cheek. His pleasure in his gain was spoilt. An undefined and evil feeling agitated him, for he could not help grieving over his lost thalers. But he had lost more than his precious money. The only man on earth for whom he felt anything like affection, and from whom he expected to meet with friendship, had shown himself unfeeling, selfish, and hostile to him. With the rest of mankind he was at war, and expected nothing else from them; for the little man with the spectacles alone he had kept his heart open; and this warm feeling had received a deadly wound by his rough demand. It was all over between him and Hippus; he could not do without him, but from that hour he bore him a grudge. The old man had made him more lonely and worse. Thus Veitel experienced the curse which falls on the wicked, that they are rendered miserable, not only by their misdeeds, but also by their better feelings.

However, this melancholy mood did not last long, for shaking it off resolutely, he soon after pulled the rest of his treasure out of his pocket, examined each note carefully, and put down their numbers first in his pocket-book, and then on a scrap of paper, which he hid in a cleft of the floor. This occupation comforted him a little, and then he turned his thoughts to the future. Again he danced about the room making plans, his position in life was changed at one stroke. As owner of eight thousand thalers ready money—alas, they were only seven thousand six hundred!—he was a kind of Croesus in his little set; many others did business to the amount of hundreds of thousands without possessing the fortune that he had; the world was open to him, the oyster-shell was on the dish, the only question was with what lever to open it. How was he to place his capital so as to double it—ay, to make it tenfold? Now he must make his choice, and he must do it alone. There were perhaps ten different ways for him: he could go on lending money at high interest, he could speculate in shares, he could deal in wool or corn; and with a sentiment of pride the rogue said to himself, that he could succeed in all these ways as well as the most cunning of his colleagues. But each of these transactions might endanger his capital; he could thereby become a rich man, but he might also lose all he had, and this idea frightened him so much that he put aside all these plans. There was one employment by which a shrewd person might gain much, and in which it was possible to avoid great losses. From his home he had wandered about as a travelling hawker, he had visited the farm-yards of the landed proprietors; at the wool market and in the streets he had offered his services to distinguished individuals, with moustaches and decorations, and in his employer's office he had been incessantly busy with the properties and money concerns of the country nobility. He knew well old Ehrental's secret longing to possess a certain estate, and how often the little man with the spectacles had scoffingly recommended him to become owner of that manor. How did it happen that in his grief about that old man, he thought at once of his school-fellow Anthony, and of the day when he had talked with him for the last time? On that occasion, when he migrated to the town, he had

been strolling about the baron's estate, had stood at the door of the stable calculating the value of the double row of cattle, until the maid had sent him away roughly. Now like a flash of lightning the idea darted into his head, he himself might become the owner of that manor, as well as Ehrenthal; he could have his white wool washed by others, and drive to town with a pair or four horses. He grasped the table firmly with his hands, and cried out, "I will do it." He sat down on his chair and crossed his arms; from that moment he had an object in life.

He calculated thus: he had, according to his views, a right to the property of the baron by this resolution; he would gain this right by his money; he would obtain a mortgage on the estate for himself; in this way he would place his capital safely for some years, and would work on quietly till the great day came, when he could get the whole estate into his own hands; in the worst case, if his plan failed, which was to be the object of his life, at least his money would not be lost; in the meanwhile he would become agent and commissioner; he would negotiate purchases and sales, as so many others did; poor devils, who grudged one another a half per cent., and distinguished gentlemen who dealt wholesale in estates, and made hundreds and thousands by cunning and corruption. Veitel knew that there were few ways with which he was not familiar. In this manner he would begin: as long as he could make use of old Ehrenthal, he would remain with him as his factotum. Rosalie was beautiful and rich, and Bernhard was not to be reckoned upon as his father's heir; perhaps he would become the son-in-law of old Ehrenthal, perhaps not, there was no hurry in that matter. There was one other person with whom he had to settle—the little black man who was then drinking his expensive wine at the tavern opposite; with him also in future he must keep a reckoning. He resolved on paying him for every service he did, and confiding to him only what was absolutely necessary.

These were the resolutions to which Veitel came; and when he had pondered over his plans, as an author over a book that he is about to write, he put his notes under his pillow, closed his door, barricaded it with a heavy chair, and threw himself on the hard bed exhausted with the day's exertions—he, the new agnate of the Rothsattels, the self-constituted partner of their fine estate. What the dealer had plotted in his miserable room was, perhaps, the presumptuous fancy of a fool; but perhaps it was the opening of a series of energetic and eventful actions, a dark destiny for the baron and his family. The baron himself would have to decide this.

That very evening the baroness and her daughter were sitting in their rose bower in the garden, and both had gradually become silent. The mother appeared to be watching intently the dance of a butterfly, which kept rushing into the flame of the candle, or striking against the glass which shaded the light from the draught of the night air.

Leonora was bending over her book, and cast from time to time a searching look into her mother's serious face.

A step was heard on the gravel, and the old steward of the property came up to them in haste, with his cap in his hand, and asked for the baron.



"What is the matter?" said Leonora to the old man; "has anything happened?"

"The old horse is dying," answered he, sadly; "he has been struggling and biting the manger, and is now lying panting in the last agony."

"The deuce he is!" exclaimed Leonora, springing up.

"Leonora!" said the mother, reproachfully.

"I will go and see after it myself," said Leonora, vehemently; and hastened with the old man to the stable.

The sick horse was lying on the straw, covered with perspiration, its flanks heaving and gasping for breath; by the light of the stable-lantern you might see the ploughmen standing about, looking phlegmatically at the suffering animal.

When Leonora entered, the horse turned his eyes towards her, as if seeking for help.

"He knows me still," she cried, and beckoned the head ploughman to her side.

"He has worn himself out," said the man; "now he is quiet."

"Get a horse, and go for the veterinary surgeon immediately."

The man, not liking to ride some miles at night, lingered, and said, "The doctor is never at home; before he can come it will be all over with the horse."

"Obey," said Leonora, coldly, and pointed to the door. The man went out reluctantly.

"What is the matter with the head ploughman?" asked Leonora, when she left the stable with the steward.

"He does not do his duty, and ought to be sent away. I have told the baron so several times; but with him the rogue is as smooth as an earwig—he knows that he is a favourite; to everybody else he is cross-grained; and I have every day reason to complain of him."

"I will speak to my father," said Leonora, knitting her brows.

The old servant stopped, and continued confidentially, "Ah, well! dear young lady, it would be a great thing for the farm if you would take some charge of it. I am not satisfied with the cows; the new housekeeper does not know how to manage the dairymaids. She is too gay, and is tricked out with ribbons. Formerly things went on better; the baron came himself sometimes, and took an interest in the churning; now he is occupied with other business: and when the people know that the master is indifferent, they defy the steward if he attempts to be strict with them. You can be sharp with them; it is a pity that you are not a gentleman."

"Yes, you are right; it is a pity," Leonora nodded her approbation of her old friend's words. "We must bear it patiently; but I will look after the dairy. I will henceforth be present at the churning. What is the price of corn now? you were in town the other day."

"Yes," said the old man, very much depressed; "the baron ordered me to go. I do not know what has come over him; in the winter he sold the whole stores to dealers on delivery. Look, now," he continued, sorrowfully shaking his white head, "formerly I sold, put it down in the book, received the cash, and paid it down to the baron. Now-a-days I can no longer book the income: when the page is full I make a stroke, but draw no money."

Leonora listened with sympathizing interest to the complaint.

"Hem, it must be one of the new arrangements; do not grieve over it, my old friend; whenever papa is not here I will go over the fields with you, or look for you there; you shall smoke your pipe then. How do you like the new pipe that I bought you?"

"It is getting dark with smoke," said the steward, smiling, and drawing the pipe half out of his pocket to prove his words. "But to return to the horse: the baron will be angry when he hears of the misfortune. It is not our fault."

"Well," said Leonora, "if there is no help for it, we must bear it patiently. Good night, steward; mind you go back to the horse."

"Certainly, Fraulein; and a good night to you," said the steward.

The baroness was still sitting by herself under the swelling buds of the roses. She, too, was thinking of her husband who, in former days, had seldom been absent from her side, when she passed the warm summer evenings in the open air; he was changed; he was still as kind and loving to her as ever; but he was often absent in mind and weary, and had become irritable, and easily put out by trifles; his gaiety was more noisy, and his desire for the society of gentlemen greater than it used to be; his home—even she herself—seemed to have less attraction for him. She asked herself, again and again, whether this change was the sad consequence of the bloom of youth having vanished from her brow. She struggled against this feeling, and sought anxiously for other reasons for the frequent absence of her beloved husband.

"Is my father not yet returned?" asked Leonora, coming up to her. "I heard a carriage on the high road."

"No, my child," said the mother; "he has much to do in the town, and it is possible he may not return till to-morrow."

"I don't like papa's being so much in town, and visiting about so constantly amongst the neighbours. It is a long time since he has read to us of an evening."

"He wishes you to be my reader," said the mother, laughing; "you shall try it this evening. Fetch your book, and sit down quietly by me, you impatient child."

Leonora pursed up her little mouth sulkily, and instead of getting her book, sat down by the baroness, threw her arms round her neck, and pressing her head to her bosom, and stroking her hair, said, "Dear heart, you are sorrowful; some grief oppresses you; you are anxious about my father? He is not what he used to be. I am no longer a child; tell me what he is doing."

"You are a silly child," answered the baroness calmly, "I have nothing to conceal from you. If your father has really something that takes him away, it is not for us women to inquire about it; we must wait till he thinks proper to open his heart to us."

"And in the meanwhile we are to make ourselves unhappy, perhaps about nothing," exclaimed Leonora.

"We must try to be content, and when we have confidence in those we love, it is not difficult," answered the baroness, freeing herself from Leonora's arms.

"And yet your eyes are moist with tears, and you conceal your sorrow from me. If you will maintain this silence, I will not, I will ask my father."

"That you must not," said the baroness, in a decided tone.

"My father!" cried Leonora, "I hear his step." The stately figure of the baron approached the bower with rapid steps.

"Good evening, my home birds," he called out in a cheerful voice, while still distant from them. He embraced his wife and daughter, and looked at them with such a joyful expression, that the baroness forgot her sorrow and Leonora her question.

"It is pleasant to have you back so early," said his wife, with a bright smile. "Leonora was anxious for your return, the evening was so beautiful."

The baron sat down between them, and said with a smile, "Do you notice any change in me?"

"You look happier," said the baroness, "otherwise you are much as usual."

"You have had your uniform on, and have been paying visits," cried Leonora, "I know it by your white cravat."

"You are both right, but I bring you good news. The king has been so gracious as to give me the order which my father and grandfather wore; I am glad that the cross has become almost hereditary in our family, and together with the order, there came a gracious letter from the prince, in which he congratulates me, and calls to mind the years that I lived with him, and speaks kindly of you, the admired lady of the court. I wish he could see you now, he would think it impossible that so many years could have passed, since he was your partner at the balls."

"How happy I am," exclaimed the baroness, throwing her arms round her husband's neck; "for years I have wished for this order for you." In the meanwhile Leonora opened the case, and examined the cross by the light of the candle. "We will put the decoration on him." The baroness hung the cross round his neck, and most loyally first kissed him and then the cross.

"We know the value of these kinds of things now-a-days," said the baron, "but I own, that this is the order of all others that I most prefer. Our family is one of the most ancient, and in our line, which is indeed a rare occurrence, there has never been a *mésalliance*. This cross is now almost the only remembrance of the old times, when such things were valued. Now another power takes the place of our honours—money, and we also are so situated that we are obliged to seek for it, if we would maintain our families in their position. The prince's letter speaks of the antiquity of our family, and expresses a hope that it may flourish for many generations as heretofore, a pattern of nobility, these are the words of the letter. You, Leonora, and your brother, must take care of that."

"I live as a pattern of nobility," said Leonora, crossing her arms; "but I can do nothing for the honour of the family. If I marry, for which I feel no inclination, I must take another name, and it will signify very little to the old ancestors in armour who are hanging in the bow-window room upstairs, whom I make my lord, at all events, I cannot remain a *Rothsattel*."

The father laughed and drew his daughter towards him. "I wish to know where my daughter has learnt these heresies?"

"It has come upon her gradually," said the mother.

"It will pass," added the father, kissing his daughter's forehead;

"here, read the prince's letter, while I look after the horse, then we will sup in the open air."

"I will go with you to the sick horse," said Leonora.

This decoration was the remembrance of a powerful confederation of religious knights, who had conquered countries and founded a kingdom, and however indifferent the baron pretended to be, it shed a bright light over his heart. The felicitations of his numerous acquaintance did him good, and his self-respect thereby received a secret support which it much needed. In this disposition he was found at the end of a week by Ehrental, who, on his way to a neighbouring village, looked in to congratulate the baron. He had already made his parting bow, when he stopped once more, just to drop a word. "My lord baron had once an idea of establishing a manufactory of sugar from beetroot. I hear that a company is about to be formed for a similar project in this neighbourhood, and I have been asked to join in the enterprise, but would first wish to ascertain how my lord baron proposes to act in the matter."

This was a very unacceptable piece of news to the baron. For years he had been thinking of erecting a manufactory of that kind on his own property: he had visited a number of similar establishments, had made calculations, and had consulted practical men, he had even fixed the spot where the factory would be least seen, and for some time had been very keen on the subject, but latterly it had become less alluring to him. The natural fears of a cautious man, the representations of his acquaintances, as to the great cost, and, above all, the prospect of disquiet to his life, and the many inconveniences which such an undertaking would cause in the management of his property, had induced him to abandon the idea for the present, and to prefer, for some years at least, the quiet of a safe investment for his capital, at moderate interest. Now, it appeared that a project that he had reserved for himself at some future time, was going to be carried out by others; it was evident that his own would be destroyed, for two similar manufactories in close proximity must necessarily injure each other. He exclaimed in a tone of annoyance, "How provoking, just when I have locked up my capital for some years!"

"My lord baron," said the dealer, "you are a rich man, and much respected in the neighbourhood: if you will announce that you yourself are going to establish a manufactory of this kind, the company will break up."

"You know that I cannot do it now," answered the baron, angrily.

"You can if you will," replied the dealer, with a respectful smile. "I am not the person to persuade you to such a step, for why should you wish to make money? But if you say to me, Ehrental, I wish to erect a manufactory, there is no difficulty in your having as much capital as you please. I myself have a sum in hand of from seven to ten thousand thalers which you may have any day. And I will make you a proposition: I can procure you the money you want at cheap interest. For the sum which I can let you have of my own, you can give me a share in the business, up to the day when you return me the money, for the rest, you may open a mortgage on your estate, until you pay back the whole of the loan, which will be in a few years."

The proposition appeared disinterested, even friendly; yet the baron was too well aware of the great change that the business would cause in his whole life. He foresaw, with anxious fears and with a feeling of mistrust, both of himself and of Ehrenthal, a future full of complications; he therefore received Ehrenthal's proposition very coldly, and said, "I thank you for your confidence, but I do not like to do that with other people's money which can only be successful if done with the surplus of one's own income."

Ehrenthal was obliged to take leave with this answer, but said when at the door, "You may think the matter over, I will manage to delay the company for a month in case anything should happen in the meanwhile."

None but a *prima donna* can imagine the numberless notes and messages from strangers that the baron received in the subsequent month; first Herr Ehrenthal wrote, "I have put off the shareholders for a month:" then Herr Karfunkelstein, shareholder, wrote, "I hear that you intend establishing a manufactory, in which case I give up my own project:" then Herr Ehrenthal wrote again, "I send you an annual account of a similar institution, by which you can see how much can be gained:" then there was a letter from Herr Wolfsdorf, "It is said that the baron is going to set up a manufactory: I have capital to lend at moderate interest, and would be happy if I could obtain a mortgage, though I should prefer a share in the business:" last of all, with an illegible name, which seemed to be Herr Itzig Veit, wrote, "The baron ought not to make the bargain with Ehrenthal, which is rumoured in the town—Ehrenthal is a rich but interested man, the baron should at least not receive him as a partner; I, the writer, can procure him much better capital, and very different partners." Upon which Ehrenthal wrote, "My antagonists are intriguing against me, in order to procure the baron other money for his fine enterprise; you may do as you please, I am an honest man and do not wish to push myself forward."

The baron was astonished to see what an extent of capital was attracted by his name, and that persons quite unknown to him considered the enterprise upon his property as certain of success. As yet he had been very fortunate in his speculations, he had almost completely overcome his aversion to money transactions, and had even got accustomed to make demands on the capital of others; now he became gradually accustomed to the idea of borrowing money from strangers, for the purpose of establishing his manufactory. Only one thing hurt his pride, that was receiving the complacent Ehrenthal as his partner; this effect was produced by the letter of the indistinct writer. He resolved, in case the enterprise should be realized, to give the money-lender a fixed interest for his loan. For a month the baron struggled with his own doubts, and his brow was often clouded: the baroness noticed her husband's uneasiness with secret pain. Often he drove to the town, or to the properties of his friends, in order to visit similar manufactories, and to calculate the profits it was possible to realize; he could learn nothing certain about the projected company. He received some unfavourable accounts of the results of several manufactories, but he placed them to the natural fear of his competition, or of their own management.

A month was over; another letter arrived from Ehrenthal urging

the baron to inform him what resolution he had come to, as some of the shareholders would not delay any longer.

On the evening of a hot summer's day, the baron, in an agitated state of mind, left his farm-yard and walked into the fields. The horizon was lighted up by a bright yellow light, which rose from behind a dark mass of vapour; the clouds hung heavily over his head like dark mountains in the air with icy summits; around him all was sultry, gloomy, and foreboding. The crickets in the corn chirped louder than usual: their warning song sounded incessantly in the baron's ear. The little birds sang shrilly on the branches of the trees; they fluttered from tree to tree, calling out one to another, that something terrible was brooding over their fields; "We little people," they cried, "may endure it, but let the great folks take care of themselves. The swallows hovered low over the ground, and flew close by the baron, as if he had ceased to exist, and the place where he stood were empty. The wild plants by the roadside drooped their withered leaves: they were covered with a yellow dust, and looked like the plants of a by-gone world, which thousands of years ago had been green and blooming. A thick cloud of dust rolled along the road towards the baron, the teams returning home passed him, the horses walked wearily and with drooping heads, the yellow cloud whirled round them and concealed their bodies, so that their heads alone rose above it, and they appeared to the baron like ghostly figures floating through the air. After them slowly came the flocks of sheep, in three divisions, also veiled in clouds of stifling dust. The bells of the animals sounded dull in the thick air, and, as if from a great distance, the voice of a ghost-like sheep-dog was heard, now here and now there. And when the shepherd saluted his master as he passed by him, the man looked as grey and shadowy as a spectre returning from the grave, that had once driven real sheep across the fallow, and tended them in the blooming fields.

The baron stopped while the horses and sheep were passing; he stood by a faded torch-weed on the edge of the ditch; he listened to the birds among the leaves, and uneasy thoughts stirred within him. He went along the bank above the lake, where Anthony had cast his last look upon the castle. It stood before the baron with a red glow on its turrets and walls, bright flames seemed to flash from the tops of the turrets up to the clouds, every window was glowing with fire, and the bunches of roses lay like drops of blood on the dark yellow foliage of the creepers. Above the castle the clouds were gathering and rolling together, and nearer and nearer came the black masses enveloping the glowing edifice in the darkness of night. Not a leaf stirred on the trees, no ripple curled the dark surface of the water, it lay dead, like a sea of the nether world. The baron bent down in search of some sign of life, were it only a dragon-fly or water-spider, to break the gloomy silence about him; a pale human face stared at him from the depths of the lake; he staggered back, and it was only when he looked again that, to his amazement, he recognized his own image; and all around him was sultry, gloomy, and foreboding.

He leant against a hollow willow-tree, and gazed fixedly on his house, and on the windows of those he loved; he tried to catch the outlines of their figures; he listened for a sound from the baroness's

piano; he wished to see Leonora's bright ribbons fluttering from the balcony of her room; but no sign of life was to be discovered about the house; the castle was quiet as the grave, desolate, like a building of the olden time, illuminated with a ghostly light;—yet a few moments, and it would vanish away. Then the waters might rush over it, and people would tell one another that here there had once been a fine castle, inhabited by a proud baron, but that was long, long ago.

A fallen house—an extinct family! When the time came that a stranger should stand in his place, and look at a new house built by himself, that same piece of water would lie before that stranger, as it did now before him; the furrows opened by his plough would bear fruit as readily to the new-comer; the ears of corn would continue to give white flour, and the lambs to skip about the same stone fountain; the fields would lie before the new owner as now before him; the water-courses would, perhaps, follow the same tracks, and the rushes still raise their tall stems above the water; only he and his family, who now ruled over it all, would have disappeared—yes, even the most trifling recollection of them.

Thus stood the lord of the castle, paralyzed by the spell which rested on the earth, and on his own soul. He fetched a deep breath, and wiped the perspiration from his brow. He was helpless, and, as it were, broken down. Suddenly a sharp sound rushed through the tops of the trees—it was the hunting cry of the wind. Once more all was still, and then the storm burst suddenly from above, roared among the trees, whizzed over the water, bent the grey branches of the willow, and made the clouds of dust on the road whirl madly up to heaven. The light vanished from the castle, and a leaden gloom overspread the landscape. A zigzag flash of lightning pierced through the darkness, the long, majestic roll of the thunder was heard, the wild hunters of the air chased over the abodes of man. The baron raised himself, and opening his coat, exposed his breast to the blasts of the wind. Leaves and branches flew about him, and big drops of rain fell on his head; regardless of the storm, he stood gazing at the clouds and watching the forked lightning, as if he expected a decision from above. The gallop of a horse was heard upon the road, and a cheerful, manly voice called out, "Father," and a young officer reined up his horse near him.

"My son, my dear son," cried the father, with trembling voice, "you come at the right time." He embraced the young man fervently, and when he released him from his arms, held his hands a long while within his, and seemed never weary of looking at him. The rider was covered with dust; but his youthful face and fearless eye at this moment spoke decisively to the father—all doubts, every gloomy foreboding vanished: he felt himself firm again, as became the head of his house: before him, blooming in youth, stood the future of his family. That this token should come just now, when he was obliged to make his decision, seemed to him like a command of destiny. "Now come home," he said; "there is no reason why we should continue in the rain."

Whilst the baroness led her son to the sofa, and gazed delightedly on his manly countenance, whilst Leonora began forthwith a little dispute with her brother, the baron walked to and fro in the sitting-

room, and looked from time to time through the pouring rain at the landscape, whilst the flashes of lightning followed one another more rapidly, and the pauses between the claps of thunder grew shorter.

"Shut the window," said the baroness, "the storm is coming nearer."

"It will not hurt our house," answered the baron; "the conductor is on the roof: it was shining just now like a light against the dark clouds. Look there where the clouds are thickest, beyond the light green oak."

"I see the place," said the baroness.

"Prepare yourself," continued the baron, smiling; "your blue sky there will be covered for ever by grey clouds, and the chimney of a factory will rise over the trees."

"Are you going to build?" asked the baroness, anxiously.

"You are going to establish a manufactory," exclaimed the lieutenant, reproachfully.

"Yes," said the baron to his wife, "and the undertaking will have many inconveniences both for you and me, and will make great demands on my powers in every way; nevertheless, if I do it, it will not be for our own sake, but for our children and family. I wish to preserve the estate in our house, and to increase the revenue sufficiently, to enable the lord of this estate to provide for those of his children to whom he cannot leave the estate: it has cost me a long struggle. To-day I have decided."

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

THE baron carried on the preparations for his factory with great vigour. He tried to make at least a portion of the bricks on his own property, and he marked the trees which were to be cut down the following winter. An architect was recommended by Ehrenthal, and the baron himself engaged an engineer. He inquired carefully concerning the character of the man to whom the arrangement and management of the manufactory was to be entrusted, and congratulated himself on having, after a long search, found an honest man who possessed an uncommon amount of theoretical knowledge. Perhaps this last qualification was a questionable recommendation to the baron, for practical men objected to the person chosen, that he never could carry on an establishment of this kind in a quiet course, but too often interfered with the daily work by the hasty introduction of new inventions. He was therefore considered expensive and unsafe. However, the intelligence and honesty of the man were a main point with the baron—perhaps the more so because he had a secret feeling that these qualities were necessary to the overseer to compensate for his own deficiencies.

But bright as these prospects were, there was one drawback. Order and comfort were no longer to be found on the estate: they had emigrated in the middle of the summer with the storks, which for many years had had their nests at the back of the great barn. Everybody was disturbed by the new work. The baroness lost a corner of



the park, and was almost brokenhearted to see a dozen of the fine old trees cut down. A crowd of strange workmen invaded the farm like a swarm of locusts, with poles, pickaxes and carts. They destroyed the turf in the park, encamped for their meals close to the castle, and often annoyed the ladies by their want of respect. The gardener wrung his hands over the numerous thefts of fruit and vegetables; the steward was in utter despair at the confusion which all this occasioned in his farming. The new hands who had been engaged rendered the control of the farm-labourers more difficult. The new teams, bought in a hurry, were not up to their work. The farm-horses were employed in carting materials, when they were most needed in the fields, and his fine oxen were no longer of use to him. The expenses of the farm increased, and the revenue threatened to diminish; ground, too, which was destined for the cultivation of beet-root occasioned the old man heavy work; the rotation of the crops must be considerably changed, and the day-labourers had to be taught their new work. Leonora was often obliged to comfort the old steward, and bought him many a pound of tobacco from the town, that he might blow away his sorrow with the blue clouds. But the baron himself had the heaviest burden to bear. His study, formerly frequented only by his steward or occasional petitioners, became now a public room, like a tradesman's shop. He had to advise on all sides, to give information, and to surmount obstacles. He was obliged daily to gallop off to the town, and when he returned for a peaceful evening at home, he appeared to his family sorrowful, morose, and worn out. His mind was filled with bright hopes, but how difficult it was to realize them!

The baron found some comfort in Ehrenthal's warm affection. The latter knew how to make himself useful everywhere; he had always advice ready at hand, and was never at a loss for an answer. He often visited the castle, and was always a welcome guest to the baron, but not so to the ladies. They suspected it to be his doing, that this flood of business had broken in, and invaded the castle, within and without. Happily, his visits were short, and though it was clear that he felt quite at home on the property, yet there was no want of respect in his demeanour.

One sunny afternoon, Ehrenthal, with his diamond pin in his shirt-frill, entered his son's room. "Will you come with me to-day to the Rothsattels, my Bernhard? I have told the baron that I would bring you, and present you to the family."

Bernhard sprung up from his seat. "But, father, I am quite a stranger to them!"

"When you have seen the property, and have made acquaintance with the baron, the baroness, and their daughter, you will be no longer a stranger. They are kind people," he added, good-naturedly.

The son had still many doubts and fears, but the father conquered them, by assuring him positively that the baron expected them.

Bernhard sat in the carriage—the birds flew high in the air over his head—the poplar-trees by the side of the road seemed to flit past him—the sun shone gaily on his pale face, and asked, "Man! whence come you? I know you not!" Anxious and uneasy, Bernhard fidgeted nervously on his seat. Since he had known Anthony, and even before—since he had read his favourite poets—he had looked with a secret longing from his lonely room, on the brilliant existence of those who

pass their lives in careless ease, without taking the trouble to rack their brains. On this day he appeared to himself like one of those gay flutterers; this day he was going into the world, to the house of an unknown nobleman, and of a famous beauty, to whom he was to pay the tribute of admiration. He arranged his shirt-collar, pulled his hat over his brow, and crossed his arms. With curious looks he reviewed the passers-by, and stared so boldly at the toll-woman that she arranged her neck-handkerchief, and gave him a nod and a smile. Meanwhile, old Ehrental's heart overflowed with praises of the baron and his family. "Grand people!" he exclaimed; "wait till you see the baroness, in her lace hood, so fine and genteel!—too genteel for the world, as this world goes! The pieces of sugar are too large, and the wine they drink is too dear; but it suits their class, and is befitting them."

"Fraulein Leonora must be a great beauty, is she not?" asked Bernhard. "Is she as proud as young ladies of her station usually are?" Our poor Bernhard did not know many young ladies, either of this or any other station.

"She is proud," said the father, "but it is true that she is beautiful. Between ourselves, I admire her more than Rosalie."

"Is she fair?"

Ehrental reflected. "What should she be but fair or dark? She certainly has the eyes of a blonde. You may also look at the flocks on the farm, and do not forget to take a walk in the park. Look round and see if you can find a place where you would like to sit with your books."

The artless Bernhard remained silent, and looked with beaming eyes on the dark outline of the park woods, just rising on the horizon.

The carriage drove up to the castle, the footman came to the door, and the visitors heard from him that the baron was in his study, and the baroness not visible at that moment, but that the Fraulein Leonora was walking in the garden. Ehrental turned round the corner of the house—Bernhard followed him full of curiosity. Across the grassplot they perceived the tall figure of Leonora, who came slowly to meet the strangers. Ehrental drew himself up, and, encircling his hat with his left arm, presented his son: "My son, Bernhard." Then, turning to him, said, "This is the young lady of the house." Bernhard bowed very low. The greeting which Leonora vouchsafed to the scholar was a very cool one. "If you wish to see my father, he is upstairs, in his room."

"I will go there," said Ehrental, obediently. "Bernhard, you may remain, meanwhile, with the young lady."

When in the baron's room, the money-dealer placed on the table some thousand thalers, saying, "This is the first remittance, and what security will you give me?"

"According to our agreement, I am to give you a mortgage on my estate in exchange," replied the baron.

"I tell you what, my lord baron, for every thousand I pay you, you cannot each time register a mortgage; that would occasion much expense, and spoil the credit of the estate. Have a mortgage drawn up in a law court, naming a great sum—say twenty thousand thalers; have it put in the name of the baroness; then you will have a security

which you may sell any day, and your estate will not be encumbered by a new debt. As often as I pay you a sum of money, you will give me a simple bond, promising me, on your word of honour, that I am to have a share, to the amount of what I pay you, in this mortgage of twenty thousand thalers, which will stand in the register immediately after the bonds of the landschaft. That is simple, and remains a secret between ourselves; and when you require no further advances, we settle the matter before the notary; then you cede the mortgage to me. I return your bonds, and pay you down the difference of the twenty thousand thalers. I ask for nothing but your word of honour, on a bit of paper not larger than this scrap; and when the court has drawn the instrument for the twenty thousand, I should like to keep it for you in my house."

The baron looked up displeased at the last condition. Ehrenthal laid his hand on his arm, and said, familiarly, "Don't be uneasy, my lord baron; you can have no objection to my keeping the document. I cannot take any advantage of it, and it will be a satisfaction to me. Every lawyer will tell you that I am behaving towards you in this business in a way that is seldom done. The word that one man gives to another is often broken; but if there can be one thing firmer than another, in my eyes, it is your word of honour. If my conduct is not businesslike, my lord baron, it is at least friendly."

Ehrenthal spoke this in a tone of kindness which was not altogether feigned. His offer showed, indeed, great confidence. After many deliberations with Veitel Itzig, he had hit upon this idea. He knew that the baron would want more ready money for his manufactory than the twenty thousand thalers. It was the interest of the money-dealer that he should be able to obtain further sums without difficulty, and he had confidence in the nobleman;—he, the cunning rogue, trusted in the noble mind of the other. Even if Itzig had not been incessantly pointing out to him how honourable the character of the baron was, he would never have thought him capable of anything dishonourable. If there was any feeling of respectful attachment still left in his soul, it was for the baron, who had for a long time been to him an object of anxiety and jealous watchfulness. He was to the rascal, what a field is to the farmer, or a pet to a lady. There was a charming bit of sentimental affection in their relation to each other. Like the housewife who stands up for the good qualities of her four-legged pet—she looks at it with pleasure, and declares its temper to be uncommonly gentle, and considers it the most perfect specimen of its race; but when the day for its being killed arrives, she will shed a tear, perhaps—but, by St. Anthony! sorry as she is for it, the poor thing must be killed!

Meanwhile Leonora said to Bernhard, "Would you like to take a walk in the park?" Bernhard followed her silently, and gave a shy glance at the aristocratic lady, who tossed her head proudly back, and appeared little edified at his presence. When they reached the green spot which had formerly enchanted Anthony so much, she stopped, and pointed to the gravel walk, saying, "That leads to the lake, and this to the garden." She waved her hand, as if to take leave. Bernhard gazed with surprise at the place—at the turrets of the castle, and the creepers on the balcony—and exclaimed, "I have seen this before, and yet I never was here!"

Leonora stopped. "The house did not walk to the town, that I know of; but perhaps there are others like it."

"No," answered Bernhard, musing; "I have seen a drawing of it, in a friend's room. He must know you," he exclaimed, with animation, "though he has never told me."

"What is your friend's name?"

"It is a certain Herr Wohlfart."

The young lady turned round eagerly: "Wohlfart, a merchant at T. O. Schroeter's colonial warehouse—is it him? And that gentleman is your friend? How did you come to know him?" inquired she, sternly, drawing herself up before Bernhard, with her hands behind her back, like a schoolmaster who is trying a young thief for having stolen some apples.

Bernhard related how he had made acquaintance with Anthony, and how dear his excellent friend was to him. Whilst doing this, he lost a little of his embarrassment, and the lady a good deal of her stiffness. "If that is the case," said Leonora, still surprised, "tell me quickly, how is Herr Wohlfart? How does he look?—Is he gay? I suppose he is very busy?"

Bernhard answered her inquiries, and became quite eloquent.

Leonora sat down in the rose bower, and condescendingly signed to him to take a place opposite her. When he had finished, she said kindly,

"I congratulate you on having such a friend as Herr Wohlfart; he is a good young man, and I hope you are so likewise."

Bernhard smiled. "Amongst my books, I have very little opportunity of showing any goodness; I lead a quiet life, quite by myself, and chirp like a cricket; and in the busy throng of the world I often feel myself very useless."

"Reading hard would not be to my taste," replied Leonora; "one can see that you live little in the open air. Come along, I will be your guide; but pray put on your hat."

A servant came from the hall with a tea-tray. Leonora begged Bernhard to take some; and saw with pleasure that he swallowed the hot tea as hastily as a knight would his stirrup cup.

"Do not burn yourself," she said.

She led him through the park as she had formerly done Anthony. Bernhard was a child of the city; but it was not the high trees, nor the blooming beds amidst the green turf, nor yet the turrets of the nobleman's house which arrested his attention; his eyes were fixed only on the lady. It was a bright evening in September; the rays of the sun fell slanting through the trees; golden lights and dark shadows fell on the gravel walk; when a ray glanced through the foliage on Leonora's head her hair shone like gold. The proud eye, the delicate mouth, the slender figure of the blooming girl, made captive the scholar. She laughed and showed her fine white teeth, and he was enchanted; she broke off a bough and struck the bushes as she passed along, and it seemed to him as if the branches and the leaves bowed before her. They came to the bridge, which was the outlet from the park into the fields; several girls ran up to Leonora, curtsied and kissed her hand, and she accepted this homage of her subjects like a queen.

Two little maidens had twisted the hollow stalks of the candlenon

into links, and had made a long chain of them; they placed themselves before Bernhard, and held up their chain to him.

Be off, you naughty children," cried Leonora; "how dare you put yourselves in our way! this gentleman comes from the castle. They learn this trick of waylaying from the strange work-people."

Bernhard felt with pride that he belonged to her at that moment; he felt in his pocket for a trifle, and released himself from the maidens.

"It is long since I have seen such a chain," he said. "I have a vague recollection that once, as a little boy, I sat on the turf and made links such as these, and joined them together." He plucked a few stalks of the plant, and tried the childish work.

"Do you learned men take pleasure in such amusements?" asked Leonora, laughing.

"Oh yes," answered Bernhard. "I have also twined the pointed flowers of the columbine and larkspur into one another, and made wreaths of them, and pressed them in my books; then I have dried leaves and whole flowers, and arranged them in an herbarium. Many things which interest us when we are grown up are connected with some little pleasure of our childhood: the child who, by chance, gets some coloured crystals in its hand, may, perhaps, become a mineralogist. And more than one famous traveller has been led to his discoveries through Robinson Crusoe. It is always a pleasure to learn how a great man's mind has been turned to what has eventually become the object of his life."

"We women look at nature, during our whole lives, like children; we play with the glittering stones and flowers in our older days just like the little girls before us; and art is so kind as to imitate the flowers and the stones for fear that we should be in want of the toy. As you are so well versed in childish games, there is something for you;" and she pointed to a large burdock plant by the side of the path. "Have you ever made a cap of burrs?"

"No," answered Bernhard, with anxious forebodings.

"You shall have one directly," said Leonora.

They went to the burdock, and Bernhard gathered a number of the round heads and handed them to Leonora. She fastened the burrs one to another, and formed a cup with two horns. "There, you may put that on," she said, graciously.

Bernhard held the little monstrosity in his hand. "Alone I dare not," said he; "the birds on the trees would scream at me. If you would also put on a little hood."

"Of burrs you cannot ask," cried Leonora; "but you shall have your will. Come back, and I will show you how we made our little caps when we were little girls." She led him to a place where there was a group of sunflowers with dark faces and yellow rays; with a little pruning-knife she cut off some of the flowers, pierced the stalks, and made a helmet of them, which she put on, laughing. It was a strange ornament, and gave a wild appearance to the beautiful face. "Now, put on your cap," she commanded. Bernhard obeyed, and his honest, puckered face, with his black coat and white cravat, looked so odd beneath the cap of burrs, that Leonora could not refrain from laughing, and tried in vain to conceal it with her handkerchief.

"You look such an object!" Bernhard immediately took off his cap. "Come to the water; you shall look at yourself."

She next took him to the spot where the foundations for the factory were dug. It was a wild place, where heaps of earth, thousands of bricks, trunks of trees, and beams, had all been collected together; the workmen had taken a holiday, and left the place: only a few children from the village were crawling amongst the timbers, collecting chips for their evening fires. A few steps behind the building-ground a bay or lake ran in, bordered by bushes, and covered with green duck-weed. "How desolate it looks here!" said Leonora, sadly; "the branches of the shrubs are broken, and the trees are injured: all that comes from the buildings. We seldom come here, on account of the strange workmen. The children of the village, too, have become impudent, and have established here a playground, and there is no preventing them."

At that instant a boat came from behind the wooded promontory, a village girl, a plump-faced, round little thing, was standing in it, and tottered, frightened at the rapid motion of the boat, which her elder brother pushed from the shore with a pole.

"Look there," exclaimed Leonora, indignantly, "the imps have taken our boat, too! Come back to the shore directly." The children were frightened at the call; the boy let the pole fall into the water; the little girl, in all the agony of a bad conscience, staggered to the edge of the boat, lost her balance, and fell into the water. The boy floated on helplessly into the bay. A loud shriek from the shore and from his throat followed the fall of the little one.

"Save the child!" cried Leonora, frightened out of her senses.

Bernhard jumped obediently into the water, without remembering that he could not swim; he waded some paces on, then stood helpless up to his shoulders in mud and water; he stretched out his hand towards the place where the child had sunk, but the point was still several yards off. Meanwhile Leonora, quick as lightning, had sprung behind a bush, and after a few moments appeared on the other side of the bay, rushing to the projecting part of the shore. From the depths of the green duck-weed Bernhard gazed with terror and delight at the noble figure; the fantastic crown of flowers was still on her head; her airy dress floated in light folds round her body; her eyes appeared to start from her head as she gazed eagerly at the spot where the frock of the child was still visible. She raised her arms high above her head and sprang into the lake; the crown fell from her head. With rapid strokes she swam to the child, caught hold of its frock, and with two strokes of her disengaged arm gained the boat: she held fast to it, and exerting all her strength, lifted the child in, took the chain of the boat, and dragged it after her to the shore. Bernhard, pale as death, had watched all her exertions, and having struggled back to land, gave her his hand, and drew the boat ashore. Leonora seized the inanimate child, and Bernhard lifted the boy out of the boat; then they both hastened to the gardener's cottage, which was near. The boy followed, screaming. The wet dress clung close to Leonora's figure; and as she moved rapidly along the beauty of her form was fully developed to the admiring eyes of her companion. She did not think of it. Bernhard rushed with her into the gardener's room; but Leonora instantly turned him out. With the assistance

of the gardener's wife she undressed the lifeless child, and tried to restore it by rubbing. Meanwhile Bernhard was leaning against the door outside, his teeth chattering with cold, and his eyes glowing with excitement, like burning coals. "Does the child live?" he cried, through the door.

"It lives," answered Leonora.

"Thank God!" exclaimed Bernhard, clasping his hands together; but the god he was thinking of at that moment was the beautiful woman within. He stood long there, trembling and dreaming, till a tall figure in a woollen gown and bodice came out of the house. It was Leonora in the dress of the gardener's wife, still excited from her exertions, but with a cheerful smile on her lips. Bernhard, wild with emotion, seized hold of her hand, and kissed it more than once; he could have knelt before her.

"You are a pretty sight, sir; you will catch cold."

He stood before her wet and dripping, and covered with duck-weed and mud. "I don't feel cold," he said; but his limbs shivered.

"Run into the house," said Leonora. She opened the door, and called to the woman, "Give the gentleman some of the gardener's clothes. There is the bed-room; make your toilet."

Bernhard hastened into the room. The gardener's wife brought him what clothes she could find on the moment; and after a while he stepped from the house, changed into a country lad, and found Leonora walking to and fro with rapid steps, in the evening sun. "Come to the castle," she said, resuming her quiet, protecting air.

"I should like to see the child once more," begged Bernhard. They went up to the bed where the child was lying. The little one looked with sleepy eyes at the sallow face of the man who bent over her and kissed her forehead.

"She is the child of a labourer in the village," said the woman. Bernhard, behind Leonora's back, laid his purse on the bed. They hastened back to the castle, where Ehrental was waiting impatiently in his carriage for the return of his son, and with inexpressible astonishment recognized his Bernhard in the dress of a gardener's boy.

"Give the gentleman a cloak," said Leonora to the servant; "he feels cold. Wrap yourself up well, or you will long remember your walk amongst the duck-weed."

And Bernhard did remember it long. He wrapped himself up in the cloak, and sank into the corner of the carriage. The cold bath was followed by a burning heat, and his blood rushed violently through his veins. He had seen the fairest woman on earth; he had witnessed what to him was greater and more transporting than any of the poet's dreams in his manuscripts. He was ashamed at the thought of how awkwardly he had behaved, and how, whilst he was low in the water, he had been obliged to look up to the heroine who had shown such courage and resolution. He returned only short answers to his father's questions. Thus the father and son sat by each other—cold craftiness and burning passion. Both had in that drive obtained what their hearts had been longing for: the father a right to a fine estate; the son an adventure that gave a new impulse to his life.

The factory rose slowly on the estate. In Ehrental's strong box

was the baron's casket, which was filled with bonds and the new mortgage; and while Bernhard's delicate body was suffering from the effects of the cold bath, his soul was intoxicated with the sweetest fancies.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

ONE afternoon the postman brought a letter for Fink, sealed in black. Fink opened it, and went silently to his room; and as he did not return, Anthony hastened anxiously upstairs to join him. He found Fink sitting on the sofa, resting his head on his hand.

"You have had bad news, I fear," said Anthony.

"My uncle is dead," answered Fink. "He was travelling in one of the Mississippi boats on business, when the engine blew up. He was, perhaps, the richest man in Wall Street, New York. He was a very inaccessible man, but to me showed much kindness in his way, and I have repaid him with ingratitude, like a foolish child. This idea renders his death very bitter to me; besides which, this event is decisive as to my future."

"You will leave us!" exclaimed Anthony, aghast.

"I shall start to-morrow. The deceased has made my father heir to the greater part of his possessions; to me he has left as a legacy his landed property in the Western States. My uncle made great speculations in land, and it is my task now to regulate all these difficult and confused affairs. Therefore my father wishes me to go as soon as possible to New York; and I believe that the presence of one of the heirs will be necessary there. My father seems all at once to have gained great confidence in my accuracy and knowledge of business. Read this letter."

Anthony hesitated to take the letter.

"Read, Anthony," said Fink, with a sad smile. "In my family, father and son do not write secrets to each other."

Anthony looked at one paragraph: "The excellent testimony which Herr Schroeter has sent me of your practical talent and sagacity in business, induces me to request you to go yourself. In that case, I shall let you have Herr Westlock from our business as an assistant."

Anthony laid the letter down silently, and Fink asked, "What do you say to the praise which the Principal bestows upon me so liberally? As you know, I have some grounds for thinking that I am not in his favour."

"And yet I think his praise just, and his judgment right," answered Anthony.

"It is all one, whatever was his reason for giving it," replied Fink, "it decides my fate. I shall now become what I have long wished to be, a landed proprietor beyond the ocean. We too must part, dear Anthony," he continued, taking his friend's hand; "I did not expect that it would be so soon. But we shall meet again."

"Perhaps so," said Anthony, sorrowfully, pressing the hand of the young heir within his. "But now you must go to Herr Schroe



ter; he has the first right to be informed that you are going to leave us."

"He knows it already," said Fink. "He also has received a letter from my father."

"He will the more expect you to speak to him."

"You are right; come along."

Anthony hastened back to his place, and Fink entered the little room behind the second office. The merchant came towards him with a serious countenance, and after having kindly expressed his sympathy, said: "It is understood that from this hour your connection with my house is dissolved; during the remainder of the days which you spend here, I beg you to consider yourself as a guest of my family, to whom I owe many thanks for his activity in my interests. Sit down, Herr von Fink, and let us talk quietly over your plans, and see how I can be useful to you."

Fink sat down on the sofa, and replied with equal civility: "The decision which my father has taken as to my future, agrees so entirely with my own wishes, that I feel I must thank you for it. The opinion you have expressed concerning me has been more favourable than I ought to expect, after many things that have happened. If you really were satisfied with me, I should be happy to hear it from your own lips."

"I was not entirely so, Herr von Fink," answered the merchant, quietly; "you were not in your right place here. But that could not hinder me from perceiving that you have great talents for another, even a greater sphere of action. You possess, in an eminent degree, the art of directing affairs and governing men, and are gifted with rare energy of will. For such natures the office desk is not the right place."

Fink bowed: "Nevertheless I ought to have fully performed the duties of that place, which I acknowledge that I have not always done."

"You came here without being accustomed to any regular course of business, and have during the last few months differed very little from the steadiest of my clerks. But as I am persuaded that you are more fit to be a manufacturer than a merchant, I gave the report that I did to your father."

"Then you think me fit to be a manufacturer?" said Fink, with a bow intended to thank the Principal for his good opinion.

"In the widest sense of the word," answered the merchant; "every one who opens new fields of industry, is in fact a manufacturer, and this is considered everywhere as aristocratic. It is the work of us merchants to render these sources of profit available to the multitude."

"In that sense, I am pleased with your opinion," said Fink, rising from his seat.

"Your departure will be a great loss to one of our friends," said the merchant, accompanying Fink to the door.

Fink stopped, and said quickly, "Let him go with me to America. He has the stuff to make his fortune there."

"Have you already spoken to him on the subject?" inquired the merchant.

"No," said Fink.

"Then I will not conceal from you my objections; Wohlfart is young, and the quiet and regularity of the business here appear to me desirable for the formation of his character. However, I have no right to influence his free will. I should be sorry to lose him; but if he has the conviction that he will make his fortune more rapidly with you, I will say nothing against it."

"Allow me to ask him about it directly," said Fink.

He called Anthony into the room, and said to him: "Anthony, I have begged Herr Schroeter to let you go with me. It would be very desirable for me to have you; you know that I am attached to you; we shall get on well together in our new connection. You shall yourself settle the conditions under which you are to come. Herr Schroeter leaves the decision to your free will."

Anthony was startled, and reflected awhile. The prospect for the future which was so suddenly opened to him appeared very charming, but he controlled himself quickly, looked at the Principal, and said, "Do you think that I should do right to go?"

"Not quite, dear Wohlfart," answered the merchant, rather seriously.

"Then I will remain," said Anthony, resolutely. "Do not be angry with me for not going with you. I am an orphan, and have no other home but this house and office; if Herr Schroeter will keep me I will stay with him."

Quite touched with these words, the merchant said: "But consider well that if you make this resolution you give up much. In my office, you can neither become rich, nor see much of the world; our business is limited, and the day may come when this restriction will appear irksome to you. You may obtain an independence, fortune, and friends much sooner on the other side of the ocean than here with us."

"My good father used often to say to me, Stay in the country, and gain your bread honestly. I will live according to his advice," Anthony answered in a voice trembling with emotion.

"He is, and always will remain a *Philister*," ejaculated Fink, in a kind of despair.

"I believe that this citizen feeling is a most excellent foundation for a man's happiness," said the merchant; and the matter was settled.

Fink mentioned the proposal no more, and Anthony tried to prove to his friend, by numerous little attentions, how much he loved him, and how painful the parting was to him.

In the evening Fink said to him: "Listen, my son, I should like to take a wife with me there."

Anthony gazed at his friend with astonishment, and like one who has received a violent shock, which he tries to conceal from himself and others. He inquired with affected jocoseness: "What! will you take Fraulein von Baldereck—"

"Nonsense," said Fink, somewhat petulantly, "what should I do with a wife who has no idea but to amuse herself with her husband's money?"

"Of whom are you thinking, then? You won't propose to our aunt here?"

"No, my pet, but to the daughter of the house."

"That is impossible," cried Anthony, jumping up amazed ; "that would be a fine story."

"Not at all," answered Fink, composedly ; " either she accepts me, and then I am a happy man, or she does not, and then I start without a wife."

"You certainly then will start without a wife. Have you ever before thought of Fraulein Sabine as a wife?" asked Anthony, much discomposed.

"Sometimes, often this last year ; she is the best housewife, and has the noblest, most unselfish heart in the world."

Anthony looked surprised at his friend. Never had Fink by the smallest allusion betrayed that Sabine was more to him than any other lady of his acquaintance. "But you never told me of it?"

"Did you ever tell me of your feelings for another young lady?" answered Fink, laughing.

Anthony blushed, and remained silent.

"I believe that she likes me a little," continued Fink ; "but I don't know whether she will come with me ; we will ascertain that, however : I shall go down stairs and ask her."

Anthony sprang between his friend and the door : "I conjure you, once more, consider what you are about."

"What is there to consider, you child?" said Fink, laughing ; but an unwonted agitation was visible in his movements.

"Do you love Fraulein Sabine?" asked Anthony.

"That is one of your citizen speeches," replied Fink. "Well, yes, I love her!"

"And you would take her with you into the colonies and backwoods?"

"It is just for that purpose I would marry her ; she will be a noble-hearted, strong woman, and she will give steadiness and earnestness to my life. There is no charm about her, at least it is not so easy to talk to her as to many others ; but when I take a wife I want one who can control me ; and, believe me, the black-haired lady is made for it. Now let me go, I must know what chance I have."

"Speak first to the Principal," called out Anthony, as Fink dashed away.

"First to her," said Fink, and rushed downstairs.

Anthony folded his hands, and walked to and fro in the room. All that Fink had said in praise of Sabine was well founded ; he felt that clearly ; he knew that she had given him a place in her heart, but he suspected that his friend had unknown obstacles to contend with ; besides this haste, this precipitation made him uneasy ; it was too contrary to Fink's nature. One other point displeased him : Fink had only spoken of himself : had he thought of the happiness of the girl ? was he conscious of what it would cost her to leave her beloved brother, to part from her home, to venture among a foreign people, perhaps to live a wild life ? He was indeed convinced that Fink was the man to strew all the flowers of the new world before her feet, but he was restless and constantly busy : would he always enter into the feelings of his German wife ? Involuntarily our hero took part, in his thoughts, against his friend ; it appeared to him that Sabine ought not to leave the house ; he felt the void that would be left, if she disappeared from the dinner-table and household, but above all the

void in her brother's life; thus he went on walking to and fro, sad and disquieted. It became dark; from the opposite window a feeble light shone into the room, and still Fink did not return.

Meanwhile Fink was announced to Sabine. She advanced hastily to meet him, and she coloured as she said: "My brother has told me that you are obliged to leave us."

Fink began in great agitation: "I cannot part without being open with you. I came here without any interest in the quiet life to which my dissipated mind was unaccustomed. I have learnt here the happiness and inward rest of a German household. You, Fraulein, I have always honoured as the good spirit of this house. Almost ever since my entrance into it, you have kept me at a distance which has often given me pain. I come now to tell you how much my heart has clung to you; I feel that my life could be happy if I could always hear your voice, and if your spirit could accompany mine on its future path."

Sabine grew very pale, and stepped back, "Do not go on, Herr von Fink," she said imploringly, and waved her hand as if to put the subject from her.

"Let me finish," continued he, rapidly. "I would consider it my greatest happiness if I could take with me the conviction that I have found favour in your eyes. I have not the presumption to ask you to follow me to an uncertain life, but give me only the hope that I may return in a year, and ask you to be my wife."

"Do not return," said Sabine, motionless as a statue, and in a scarcely audible voice; "I entreat of you to end this conversation."

She seized the back of the nearest chair convulsively, and held fast by it; thus she stood, without a drop of blood in her cheeks, before the suppliant, but she looked at him through her tears unchanged, with a look so full of sorrow and tenderness, that the wild man became softened, and in sorrow for her emotion, forgot all his self-confidence, and even his own wishes, and sought only to calm her.

"I am very sorry that I have disturbed you so much," said he. "I beg your pardon, Sabine."

"Go," said she, still motionless.

"Let me not part from you without a word of comfort from your lips; give me an answer; even the most painful one would be better than this silence."

"Hear me, then," said Sabine, with unnatural calmness, while her bosom heaved and her hand trembled. "I have liked you from the very day of your arrival; as a childish girl I listened with delight to the tones of your voice, and to what you described so agreeably. But I have struggled against that feeling—I have struggled against it," she repeated, "I cannot belong to you, I should be wretched."

"Why?" asked Fink, in real despair.

"Do not ask me," she said, scarcely audibly.

"I must hear my condemnation from your own lips," cried out Fink.

"You have trifled with your own life and that of others. You would act without regard to the feelings of others to gain your own ends, you will undertake great and noble things, I am sure, but men would be of no value in your eyes. I could not live with such a character.

You would be kind to me, I believe; you would always try to spare my feelings, but you would have to be constantly thinking of it, and that would be a constraint to you, and I should be alone in a foreign world. I am weak and spoilt, tied by a hundred links to the habits of this house, to the little duties of the household, and to the life of my brother."

Fink looked gloomily down, "You punish me now severely for what you disapprove in me."

"No," said Sabine, stretching out her hand towards him, "not so, my friend: if there were hours when you gave me pain, there were many in which I looked on you with admiration, and it is exactly that which keeps us asunder for ever. I cannot be tranquil when I am near you; I am always tossed from one feeling to another—now in anxious fear, then in great joy. I am not sure of myself when I am with you, and so it would always remain. I should have to conceal this struggle within me, when my feelings ought to be entirely yours; you would perceive it, and be angry with me."

She gave him her hand: Fink bent low over it, and impressed a kiss upon it.

"A blessing upon your future," said Sabine, trembling all over. "If there have been hours when you were happy amongst us, think of them when you are far away; if you have found anything that appeared honourable to you in our citizen house, or in my brother's conduct, think of it in that foreign land. In the grand life that awaits you, amidst mighty temptations, and in the wild struggle in which you will engage, do not think meanly of our ways." She held her right hand over his head, like a mother who, in sorrow, gives her blessing to her parting darling.

Fink kept hold of her hand; both were pale; both looked silently into each other's eyes; at last Fink said, in the deepest tones of his melodious voice, "Fare you well."

"Fare you well," said the girl, softly—so softly, that Fink could hardly hear the word. He passed slowly across the threshold. She looked at him, immovable as if she were watching a departing spirit.

When the merchant at the close of the office entered his sister's room, Sabine flew to meet him; she clasped her arms round him, and laid her head upon his bosom. "What is the matter, child?" asked her brother, anxiously, and pushing her hair off her moist forehead.

"Fink has been with me," said Sabine; "I have spoken with him."

"What about? has he proposed to you? has he been rude to you?" inquired the merchant, jestingly.

"He has proposed to me," said Sabine.

The merchant stepped back alarmed. "And you, my sister—"

"I have done what you might expect from me. I shall never see him again." The tears gushed from her eyes; she seized her brother's hand and kissed it; "Do not be angry with me for crying. I am still agitated; but it will pass."

"My sweet sister, dear, dear Sabine," exclaimed Herr Schroeter, clasping the weeping figure in his arms. "I hope no thought of me has induced you to reject the rich heir."

"I thought of you and of your self-sacrificing life of duty, and his attractions lost their bright colours through which I formerly saw them."

"Sabine, you have sacrificed yourself for me," exclaimed the brother, vehemently.

"No, thank Heaven! If it is a sacrifice, I have made it to this house, where I have grown up under your eyes, and to the memory of our parents, whose blessing rests on our simple life."

It was late when Fink entered Anthony's room. He looked agitated, placed his hat on the table, seated himself on the sofa, and said to his friend, "First of all, give me a cigar."

Anthony, shaking his head, brought a bundle, and asked, "How did you get on?"

"There will be no wedding," answered Fink, coldly. "She told me that I was a good-for-nothing, and no fit match for a respectable girl. Then she took the thing again sentimentally, assured me of her esteem, gave me a sketch of my character, and then dismissed me. But the devil take me," he cried, springing up, and throwing his cigar on one side, "if she is not the very best soul who ever preached virtue in petticoats. She has only one fault—she will not marry me; and, after all, she is right there too."

The vehemence of his friend's mood made Anthony feel anxious. "Where have you been so long, and whence do you come now?"

"Not from the cellar, as your wisdom seems to assume. When anyone meets with a refusal, he has a right to be melancholy for some hours at least. I have behaved as any one else would have done in such a desperate case. I have been wandering about and philosophising. I have been railing against the world, that is, against myself and the black-haired lady, and at last put an end to it by stopping before a coloured lamp, and buying these oranges of a huckster." So saying he took the fruit out of his pocket. "But now, my son, the past is gone, let us talk of the future. On this the last evening we shall pass together, no clouds should rest upon our souls. Make a glass of punch, and squeeze those big fellows into it; orange punch is an invention you owe to me. I taught it you, and now you make it better than I do, you rogue. Come and sit down by me."

The next day Father Sturm came in person to the young heir's room, to carry his trunks down to the carriage. Anthony had been helping Fink to pack up all the afternoon, and had thus dispelled the sadness which had agitated the remaining friend more than the departing one.

Fink took Anthony's hand, and said, "Before I shake hands with the rest, I repeat to you what I said before, Go on with your English, that you may follow me: wherever I may be, in a cabin or a block-house, I will keep a place for you. As soon as you are displeased with this old world, come to me. Meanwhile you may be assured that I will commit no more follies. And now do not distress yourself, my boy, there are no longer any great distances in the world." He disengaged himself, hastened into the office, had a short interview with the Principal; and it was a pleasure to see these two very different men standing side by side, the tall broad figure of the burgher, and the slender one of the aristocrat. Fink sent back one more greeting

to the ladies, pressed his friend once more to his heart, and sprang into the carriage, away for the new world.

But Anthony went sorrowfully back to the office and wrote a letter to Herr Stephen, of Wolfsburg, in which he sent the honourable man a new list of goods and samples of sugar.

Anthony felt the loss of his friend for a long time very severely. At first, he used to stop at Fink's door, and fancy he heard his joyous laugh, and often as he sat in the office he looked up expecting to catch one of Fink's roguish glances, and exchange a look of mutual understanding with him.

His position in the household was essentially altered by the departure of his friend, from the following circumstance. According to the strict rules of rank and dignity, Herr Liebold should have taken the place at table by the side of the aunt; it had been so formerly, but Fink had been shoved in between them. However, a veracious chronicler must with pain relate, that Herr Liebold rejoiced greatly in the interference; he declared, indeed, that it was most agreeable to sit by ladies, and that no man knew better than he did how to appreciate the company of the fair sex; but sometimes, he said, a near neighbourhood was very inconvenient, especially every day, and moreover at dinner, and when the lady was past the age of juvenile follies. This latter reason he avowed only to his most intimate friends, and his antagonists, among whom was the cashier, maintained that he would feel still more embarrassed and unhappy by the side of the young niece than near the calm beauty of the aunt. The result was that a quiet fermentation and secret intrigue went on in the office with respect to the place at dinner; and to the shame of the sex be it said, none of the gentlemen wished to sit near the aunt nor get so near the Principal. Therefore, the evening after Fink's departure, while Anthony was doing some commissions for his friend, a general council was held, at which Herr Jordan presided. Herr Specht declared he was ready to sit anywhere and by the side of any aunt in the world; but the president remarked to him with great civility, "That his presence was indispensable at the bottom of the table to keep up the conversation;" for the chief amusement of his neighbours was contradicting his bold assertions. Then all the others protested against the honour. Herr Jordan declared it to be his opinion that Wohlfart should sit next the aunt; he also thought this right, because he had been Fink's great friend, and his amiable temper made him a good companion for old ladies. So Anthony on the following day was advanced by the decree of his colleagues to the vacant place, after the resolution had been conveyed to the upper house by the servant, and had received the silent sanction of the ladies.

Other alterations awaited Anthony: a few days after Fink's departure, Herr Schroeter received a letter from Hamburgh, enclosing an open note from Fink to Anthony. Fink wrote:—"The furniture of the room I inhabited belonged to me: I make you *heir* to it and to anything else I may have left behind."—The word *heir* was underlined—"I have asked Herr Schroeter to let you have my room." Anthony removed to the elegant room on the first floor, and Herr Bauman was advanced to Fink's second room, so he still continued

Anthony's neighbour. Anthony did not forget to have the yellow cat on his writing-table carried down; the cat, however, became obdurate and would not continue its nocturnal movements on its pedestal, perhaps the reason was that Anthony in his active quiet life no longer dreamt.

From that time in the office he was called Fink's heir, and that inheritance had greater results for him than his colleagues had any idea of. He was now placed at the upper end of the table, and took daily his modest share in the conversation of the family.

The aunt, whose darling Fink had been, was soon reconciled to the change, and accepted Anthony's little attentions graciously, and the merchant often addressed him, and was pleased with the sober, manly views of the young man; Sabine also got into the habit of talking to him of the occurrences of the day, and her eyes, which had formerly so carefully shunned the place beyond the aunt, now rested with a friendly glance on the open countenance of our hero, and a secret understanding seemed to exist between them; one of those delicate and charming links which make life so bright and friendly. Sabine saw in Anthony the friend, perhaps the confidant of him who was gone, and Anthony felt towards the young lady a boundless respect, which made his manner so tender and considerate, that she was sometimes quite touched by it. He never spoke about Fink at dinner, although his heart was full of him; and when the aunt, in her good-humoured way, let no occasion pass of recalling him to their memory, Anthony parried her allusions with all the diplomacy he possessed, and always managed to turn the conversation to indifferent subjects.

In the business, also, Anthony's position was altered: he had been before aide-de-camp to Herr Jordan in the provincial branch, now he took his place in the foreign branch, under the Principal himself: the same work that Fink had had, was assigned to him, and he soon acquired somewhat of Fink's talent in dealing with Herr Tinkeles, and in valuing the inferior wools of Hungary.

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## VOLUME II.

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### CHAPTER I.

A BAD year arrived for the country; there was a sudden alarm of war in the eastern parts of Germany, and amongst others in our province. The fearful consequences of a great and wide-spread terror soon began to be felt. Trade stagnated, all kinds of goods and wares fell in value, everybody was trying to save themselves and their property, much capital was withdrawn from the market, and considerable sums which were invested in commercial undertakings were endangered. No one was disposed to engage in anything new, ties were destroyed which had long united men for their mutual benefit. The existence of every individual became more insecure and isolated; everywhere



one saw gloomy faces, and brows furrowed with care. The country was as if paralysed, money, the blood of commercial life, circulated slowly from one part of the great body to another, the rich feared to lose much, the poor lost the possibility of gaining even a little. The future suddenly appeared threatening, dark, and perilous, like the heavens before a heavy thunderstorm.

That word of terror, "revolution in Poland," produced these great effects in Germany. The country people beyond the frontier, excited by old recollections and by their landlords, had risen; they were marching along the frontier in every direction, led by fanatical priests; they stopped travellers and merchandise, plundered and burnt noblemen's seats and small towns, and attempted to organize themselves under military chiefs, arming themselves with scythes straightened in the forges, and with old guns which they got from concealed places. The insurgents took a large Polish town not far from the frontier, established themselves there, and proclaimed the kingdom of Poland.

In our country, troops were speedily collected and sent to the frontier, to occupy it militarily. Soldiers were incessantly conveyed to and fro along the newly-made railroad, the drums were beating everywhere, and the streets of the capital were filled with uniforms. The army, as is usual when there is a prospect of war, was in a state of great excitement. The officers rushed busily about buying maps and drinking toasts in all kinds of wine, the soldiers wrote home begging that money might be sent them, and sending greetings more or less sentimental to their sweethearts. Many soldiers' brides might be recognized by their pale cheeks, and frightened their families by terrible dreams about slain musketeers; numerous mothers purchased wool, and with tearful eyes knitted stockings for their poor sons, and providently collected together old linen to make lint, which from the experience of the late war was still considered a useful occupation in unsettled times; many a father spoke with faltering voice of its being the duty of a brave son to go to war for their king and fatherland, and then with greater firmness reminded them of their own success against the great Napoleon.

It was on a sunny autumn morning that the first news of the Polish insurrection reached the capital. Dark rumours had already, on the previous evening, excited the curiosity of its inhabitants, and a crowd of uneasy men of business and frightened idlers was standing on the platform of the railway station. Immediately after the opening of the office of T. O. Schroeter, Herr Braun, the agent, rushed in breathless, and with that secret satisfaction always felt by the bearer of bad news, told how the whole of Poland and Galicia, and many contiguous provinces, were in a blaze of insurrection; that innumerable foreign travelling agents and peaceable magistrates had been attacked and slain; that many of the frontier towns were in flames; and that a rascally Cracovite in a red cap had danced a waltz with a scythe round a cousin of his, with the intention of making an end of him, but being brought to his senses by a warning given him by the cousin's wife with a pitchfork, he only pierced his cap which had fallen off his head, whereupon the said cousin had run a hundred steps to the bridge on the frontier, where the sentry had given him a draught out of his canteen which had restored his equili-

brium, whilst the Cracovite had marched off screaming with triumph, and waving the murdered cap on his scythe.

Anthony was very much terrified by this news, and had good reason for being so. A short time before an enterprising merchant had sent an unusually large freight of goods on commission to the Firm, the value of which amounted to twenty thousand thalers, and, as is usual with such commissions, he had already drawn the greater part of the amount.

The caravan of waggons which was to bring this cargo would just then be passing through the disturbed provinces. Besides this a second caravan, with colonial goods, had been despatched to Galicia, and it was calculated must likewise be now in the enemy's country; but what was worse than all, a great part of the business done by the house, and a considerable portion of the credit given by it, was done and given in the insurgent provinces; much, perhaps all, as Anthony feared, would be placed in jeopardy by this war. So he rushed to meet the Principal as he was descending the stairs, and reported hastily the essential part of the news; whilst Herr Braun in the office was giving the other gentlemen a second edition of the awful story of the dancing Cracovite, in which this time, besides the cousin's cap, his coat and boots were also brandished on the scythe, so that the endangered possessor reached the protecting frontier with only a shirt on. By the way, we must state that in the next edition, the poor cousin was obliged to give up his shirt also, and in a subsequent one, that his hair was shaved and his limbs were cut in a most outrageous manner by Meyayah. Further, Herr Braun as a veracious man could not go, as the cousin still walked about amongst living creatures, under the shelter of a new cap.

In the meanwhile the Principal listened to Anthony's hasty report. He remained silent for a moment on the stairs, and Anthony, who looked anxiously into his face, thought he observed that he was somewhat paler than usual; but he must have been mistaken, for the merchant looked away from Anthony down on the packers, who were standing uneasy in the hall, and called to them with the same cool, business tone which had so often impressed our hero, "Sturm, push the barrel to one side, it is in the way; bestir yourselves, men, the waggon must leave in an hour." Upon which Sturm turned his broad face sorrowfully towards the merchant, and pointing with his huge fist to the door, said almost despondingly, "The drums are beating the alarm; it is beginning; our soldiers are marching. My Karl is with them as a hussar, with lace on his little coat. It is a misfortune. Alas, our goods, Herr Schroeter!"

"It is exactly on that account you must make haste, my men," answered the Principal, smiling. "The waggon is going to the frontier; there is sugar and rum in it; our soldiers will like to drink a glass of punch in the cold weather." This kind consideration for the throats of the defenders of the Fatherland restored comfort to the souls of the giants, they smiled grimly, and Sturm fastened his hook with herculean power into the nearest bale, and lifted it up with an air of contempt which meant—"We don't mind the whole set of those Poles," while the others rolled the barrel out of the way, and made laconic professional jests on the soldiers' punch.

Turning to Anthony, the Principal said, "The news is not good,

but we will not believe the whole of it." Then he went into the office, greeted Herr Braun even more cheerfully than usual, and made him relate once more the story of his cousin and the other misfortunes.

When Braun was gone, he said, to calm the gentlemen of the office, "I hope that our goods are lying at the frontier; carriers are cautious, on account of their horses; they will take care not to fall into the hands of the insurgents. If the waggons are on hostile ground we must try to get them away." To Anthony he said in a whisper, "Write at once to the custom-house office, and to our commissioner at the frontier; no doubt there will be express trains going there; a night train can bring the answer, and to-morrow we shall have more precise information."

With this the great question was closed for the day, and everything in the office took its regular course. Herr Liebold wrote his great numbers in the ledger; Herr Purzel piled up his little heaps of thalers, and put paper bands round his big parcels of bank-notes; Herr Pix seized the black brush, and painted hieroglyphics on packing-cloths near the great scales, and ruled the packers with his wonted energy. The Principal himself turned to Herr Jordan, opened the letters which had just arrived, which partly confirmed the war-like reports, settled the necessary answers, and assigned them to the different clerks. Then brokers, agents, and factors made their appearance, and, as usual, short remarks fell from the Principal's desk, or some dry jest, when the visitor entered too minutely into the terrors of the civil war. The small talk in the office was a little more animated, otherwise everything was as usual. At dinner the conversation went on as quietly as if no Polish peasant had waved his scythe, and after dinner the Principal took a drive with his sister and some ladies of his acquaintance, and the commercial men who saw him said with surprise, "He drives to-day; he has, as usual, known it beforehand; he has a clever head. It is a sound house."

Anthony was the whole day at his desk in a state of nervous excitement such as he had never known before. He was in great anxiety and suspense, yet this was a pleasure to him, as a new sensation. He was fully aware of the danger to the business and his Principal, but he was no longer low-spirited and discouraged. He felt as if his hands and feet moved on springs. His pen flew over the dry business-letters he had to write. In spite of the thoughts of danger which disturbed his mind, his style had never been so clear, and he had never calculated commissions and charges so rapidly. He had moments of almost inspired energy, which surprised himself. He observed the same in the Principal, who walked through the office with bright eyes and rapid strides.

Never had Anthony revered him as he did that day; he appeared to him quite glorious. With a kind of wild pleasure he said to himself, "This is poetry—this is the poetry of mercantile life. Such elastic energy whilst working against the current! When people say that our age is deprived of enthusiasm, and our profession most of all, they don't know what is grand and noble. See this man: at this moment, everything is at stake to which his soul clings—his business, the result of a long life of restless activity, his joy, his pride, his honour; and there he stands composed at his desk, writing letters

about the rasping of logwood, and gives his advice concerning clover-seed, and I really believe he smiles to himself." So thought Anthony when he cleared his desk in the evening and left the office with his other colleagues. They also showed their agitation. They assembled in Jordan's parlour, and with an agreeable feeling of excitement discussed, over a cup of black coffee, the news and its influence on the business. All were inclined to assume that the Firm would suffer some loss, but that it would be more secure than any other. Herr Specht observed hopefully, that in an insurrection of this kind an immense supply of colonial goods was required, and that the Firm would carry on a brilliant trade at the frontier in all kinds of liquors. If the insurrection lasted only for three months, the possible loss would be covered, for all must drink, whether friends or foes. Finally, Herr Jordan gave it as his opinion that no one knew how the matter would end. This new and sound view was adopted by most of them, whereupon each retired to his own apartment: Anthony, when in his room, heard through the thin wall, that his neighbour Herr Bauman was praying for the Firm and the Principal before he went to bed. This excited Anthony so that he paced up and down his room with long strides, till the light flickered, and the cat on the writing-desk was frightened and fell into a convulsive fit of trembling.

At a very late hour the servant entered Anthony's room noiselessly, and announced in a whisper that Herr Schroeter wished to speak to him that night. Anthony followed him quickly to the first floor, and, full of anxious expectation, entered the study of the Principal. The merchant was standing before a packed trunk, his portfolio lay on the table, and near it the infallible sign of a long journey—the large English cigar-case of buffalo leather; this held a hundred cigars, and had been for many years a favourite object of wonder to Herr Specht, and was considered by the whole office as a kind of war standard, which was only brought out and put into the carriage when the head of the business set out on some extraordinary enterprise. Sabine was busy at the drawers of the desk, silently providing what in her solicitude she thought necessary for the comfort of the traveller. She cast a hasty glance on Anthony, and her countenance fell, as she read in his face the same anxious forebodings with which her mind was filled. The Principal received Anthony kindly: "I have troubled you very late, but I did not expect you would be up still."

When Anthony answered, "Excitement would not let me sleep," a bright look from the eyes of the sister fell on him, so full of sorrow and gratitude, that he was deeply moved, and kept silent for fear of betraying his emotion.

But the Principal said, smiling, "You are young, rest comes with years. It will be necessary for me to go myself to-morrow to look after our goods. I hear that the Poles show particular consideration for our countrymen; it is possible that they may imagine our government is not indisposed towards them. That illusion cannot last long, there will be no harm in taking advantage of it to save our property. You have carried on the correspondence, and know yourself what I must do. I shall go to the frontier, and then decide on the next step."

His sister listened on his words with anxious attention; she tried to read in his countenance, what he, out of consideration for her, did

not express; but Anthony understood the meaning of his words, his chief was going across the frontier into the insurgent country.

Drawing nearer to him, he said, with imploring voice, "Could I not make this journey instead of you? I feel, indeed, that I have no right to expect you to trust me in so important a concern; but I would at least do my best to the very utmost, Herr Schroeter." Anthony's cheeks flushed as he said this; he felt at that moment inclined to fight for the goods against all the Cracovites in the world.

"That was bravely spoken, and I thank you for it," answered the Principal; "but I cannot accept your offer; the journey may present difficulties, and as the profit is mine, it is right that I should take the trouble upon me." Anthony hung his head. "My intention is, on the contrary, to leave you here with full powers in case I should not be back by to-morrow evening."

Sabine, who had been listening anxiously, now took her brother's hand, and said gently, "Take him with you."

This support gave Anthony fresh courage. "If you will not send me alone, you will perhaps at least allow me to accompany you, I may be of some use to you; it would give me so much pleasure."

"Take him with you," repeated Sabine, imploringly.

The merchant turned his looks slowly from his sister to Anthony's honest face, which was beaming with zeal, and, delighted at the zealous earnestness of the youth, answered, "It shall be so. To-morrow morning early you shall accompany me to the frontier. If my absence should be necessary for a longer time, it will be advantageous for you to be on the spot to take my instructions. In the meanwhile Jordan can conduct the regular course of business. It is not desirable that our journey should be talked of in the town. Now go to bed, Herr Wohlfart. One of our servants is waiting at the railway-station for the arrival of the night train; I have been promised that the conductor shall bring us an answer. If it is what I expect, we shall go by the first train in the morning. Good night."

Anthony bowed and thanked him, and observed, as he was going out, that Sabine threw her arms round her brother's neck with great emotion. He went to his room, packed up his travelling-bag with as little noise as possible, got out the damascene pistols Fink had left him, then threw himself half undressed on the bed, and did not fall asleep till a late hour. Towards morning he was awakened by a gentle knock, and the servant saying, "The letters are come by the railroad." Anthony hastened to the office, and found Herr Jordan and the Principal already there, in earnest conversation. At his entrance, Herr Schroeter called out to him shortly, "We are going."

"It is good," thought Anthony; "we are going into the enemy's country; we shall fight with the scythe-men, and compel them to give up our goods, for, that they should get the better of us, contrary to the Principal's will, cannot be supposed possible."

Never had Anthony banged the doors about so much, or run down the stairs so rapidly, or shaken hands with his colleagues so vigorously as in the course of the following hour. Whilst he was hurrying busily through the hall, he heard a gentle rustling near him. Sabine came up to him hastily, and took his hand: "Wohlfart, protect my brother from danger!" Anthony gladly promised to do so to the utmost of his power: he felt in his pocket for his loaded pistols, and

got into the carriage, his heart filled with the noblest and honest feelings that ever animated a young hero. He was going to seek adventures; he was proud of the confidence of his Principal, and exalted by the tender connexion into which he had come with the saint of the Firm. He was happy.

The engine panted and snorted, rushing over the wide valleys like a horse from the stables of Beelzebub. The carriages were crammed with soldiers; they were hanging on to the cargo trucks, they peeped out of the small windows of the baggage-waggon; bayonets and helmets were glittering everywhere, and everywhere knapsacks, field kettles, and drums were heaped up. Crowds of curious people were standing at all the stations, everywhere hurried questions and answers, everywhere alarming news, terrible rumours, and exciting stories. Anthony was glad when, at the end of the railroad journey, they disengaged themselves from the martial crowd, and rolled along in a light chaise with post horses towards the frontier. The high road was quiet and emptier than usual; only small detachments from the garrisons near the frontier were overtaken by the travellers. The men were singing cheerily, as if marching to a review; now and then one of the wags of the companies exercised his wit on the fast travelling civilians; sometimes an officer rode up to the carriage and saluted them, if he happened to know Herr Schroeter, or had a commission to send in advance to his night quarters. The merchant did not speak at all about business to Anthony, but talked with great cheerfulness about everything else—of former adventures, of life on the frontier, of smugglers and custom-house officers—and treated his fellow-traveller with the hearty confidence of an old comrade. With regard to the pistols, however, Herr Schroeter showed a coldness that damped the warlike ardour of Anthony, for when at the second station he carried his warlike weapons carefully from one carriage to the other, the Principal cast a hostile glance on the barrels, and when the travellers had passed the last houses of the place, he pointed to the butt-ends, which rose fraternally out of the carriage pocket, and said to Anthony: "I do not think you will succeed in recovering our goods by means of those pistols. Are they loaded?"

Anthony said yes, and with the last remnant of his martial spirit, added, "They are rifle-barrelled."

"Indeed," replied the Principal, seriously, and taking the pistols out of the pocket, called to the postillion to stop, and coolly discharged both pistols. "It is better that we should confine ourselves to the arms we are in the habit of using," he remarked, good-humouredly, whilst he returned the pistols to Anthony, "we are men of peace, and only wish to get our property back. If we cannot do so by convincing others of our right, it will be altogether hopeless. There will be much powder used in vain: all expenditure which brings no return, only ruins a country and its inhabitants. There is no race which has so little disposition to advance, and become humanized and civilized by means of its capital, as the Sclavonian. What idle people have amassed there, by pressure on the ignorant masses, they squander on fantastic trifles. With us this is only done by certain privileged classes, and the nation can bear it pretty well; but in that country this privileged class claims to itself the title of

being the nation. As if noblemen and bondsmen could form a state! They have no more right to it than those sparrows on the trees. The worst of it is that we have to pay for their experiments with our money."

"They have no middle class," assented Anthony.

"That is, they have no civilization," continued the merchant; "it is remarkable how incapable they are of producing from amongst themselves that class which represents civilization and progress, and raises a mob of dispersed agricultural labourers into a state."

"Yet there is the house of Conrad Günther in the insurgent town before us, and also that of the three Hildebrands in Galicia," interposed Anthony.

"Good people, undoubtedly, but they are all settlers from abroad, and the honest burgher feeling has no hold there; it seldom goes to the next generation. What they call towns are but a shadow of ours, and their citizens have very little of that, which makes ours the first class in the state."

"The first?" asked Anthony, surprised.

"Yes, dear Wohlfart; in the primitive ages every individual was free, and in the main equal; afterwards a half state of civilization arose, in which there were privileged freemen and bondmen; it has only been since our great towns have grown up, that there have been civilised states in the world—only since the secret has been revealed, that free labour alone makes the life of nations noble, secure, and lasting."

It was evening when the travellers reached the frontier post. It was a small village, which besides the custom-house and the dwellings of the custom-house officers, exhibited nothing but miserable cottages and a public-house. In the open place between the houses, and round the village, two squadrons of horse were bivouacking, who had placed their posts along the narrow boundary of the river, and together with a detachment of chasseurs watched the frontier. The inn was full of wild bustle; hussars and chasseurs were going in and out; they were sitting crammed together in the small public room; bright-coloured pelisses and green jackets were encamped about the house on chairs, tables, horse-cribs, rolling barrels, and any description of implements that allowed some method of being sat upon. They appeared to Anthony as so many Herr Pixes, so resolutely did they dispose of the tavern and all its contents, both living and liquid. The Jewish landlord received the well-known merchant with a loud greeting; by great zeal he contrived to clear the last room in the house for the travellers, a small partition in which they could at least pass the night by themselves.

Hardly had the merchant descended from the carriage, when half-a-dozen carriers surrounded him with cries of joy; they were the men who had been sent off lately with a convoy of goods by the Firm. They had not come off quite clear of accidents. The oldest of them related that when on the road on the other side the border, the sight of a swarm of armed peasants had obliged them to make a hasty retreat. In turning round, a wheel of the last carriage had been broken: the carrier had in his terror taken out the horses, and left the waggon on the other side of the frontier. Whilst the fugitive carrier, waving his hat about in the air, was excusing himself, the

captain in command went up to the merchant and confirmed the statement of the men.

"One can see the waggon lying on the road, about a thousand paces beyond the bridge," he said; and when the merchant begged permission to walk upon the bridge, he said politely, "One of my officers shall accompany you."

A young officer of the squadron who had just returned from a patrol was making his fiery horse prance before the tavern.

"Lieutenant von Rothsattel," called out the captain, "accompany these gentlemen as far as the end of the bridge."

With what transport Anthony heard the name, to which he attached such delightful recollections! He knew at once that the gentleman on the prancing horse could be no other than the brother of the lady of the lake. The lieutenant, who had a slender figure and slight moustaches, looked as much like his sister as it is possible for a young cavalry-officer to resemble the loveliest of earthly beings. Anthony felt at once a friendly regard for him, which the young gentleman must have read in his salutation, for he returned it with a condescending inclination of his small head. He proceeded on his prancing horse by the side of the merchant as far as the bridge. There stood the vidette, holding their pistols in their hands, cocked; motionless as statues, their horses only betrayed from time to time, by the graceful movement of their tails, or the stamping of their feet, that they were alive. The travellers hastened to the middle of the vaulted bridge, and gave searching looks along the high road. In front of them, in the distance, lay the waggon, looking like a wounded white elephant on one knee.

"A short time ago it had not been plundered," said the lieutenant; "the canvas was fastened tight over it, but by Jove they have cleared it now, there at the corner the white cover is floating."

"It does not seem much," answered the Principal.

"If you would take a wheel and a pair of horses there, you could fetch it away," remarked the lieutenant, carelessly. "Our men have had a great mind to do it all the day. They would have liked to see whether it contained anything to drink; but we are ordered not to pass over the frontier. Else it would be a trifle to get the waggon here, if the commanding officer gives you leave to pass the outposts, and if you can manage those fellows down there." As he said this, he pointed to a troop of peasants who were encamped on the other side of the bridge, behind some stunted willows, out of range of shot, and had placed an armed man on the high road as a vidette.

"We will fetch the waggon, if the commanding officer will give permission," said the Principal. "I hope it will be possible to negotiate with these people."

Anthony could not help muttering, "These gentlemen have allowed several thousand thalers to lie on the high road the whole day, they have had plenty of time to get the waggon back for us."

"One must not make unfair demands on the army," answered the merchant, smiling; "we will be content if they permit us to get our property out of the hands of the peasants." The travellers hastened back to the captain, and Herr Schroeter imparted to him his wish.

"If you can find the horses and men, I have no objection."

Immediately the carriers were assembled, and the Principal asked



who would accompany him with the horses, promising he would be answerable for any damage. After some scratching of heads and shaking of hats, several declared their willingness. Four horses were quickly harnessed, a child's sledge, belonging to the landlord, brought out, a wheel and some levers placed upon it, and the little party advanced towards the bridge, followed by the applauding jokes of the soldiers, and accompanied by some officers, who showed as much interest in the expedition as comported with their martial dignity.

When they arrived at the bridge, the captain said, "I wish you success; I am sorry to be prevented from giving you any assistance with my men."

"It is better so," answered the Principal, saluting; "we will fetch back our goods as peaceable men, and are not afraid of the gentlemen yonder, but at the same time will not provoke them. Have the goodness, Herr Wohlfart, to leave your pistols behind; we must show these armed people that we have nothing to do with warlike apparatus."

Anthony had put his pistols in his pocket, from which they were proudly peeping out; he handed them over to a rifleman who came up on a sign from Lieutenant Rothsattel. Thus they passed the bridge; at the end of it the lieutenant pulled up and muttered angrily, "These pepper-bags enter the country before us;" and the captain called after them, "Should your persons be endangered, I shall consider it no transgression of my orders to send Lieutenant von Rothsattel with men to your assistance." The lieutenant dashed back, and commanding the escort, who, eager for combat, were halted in the distance, to remain steady, returned himself to the end of the bridge, and looked with great interest and martial impatience after the civilians. For his honour and that of the army, it is right to mention, that they wished the pepper-bags a warm reception, and some inconveniences, sufficiently serious to justify them in interfering.

The entrance of the merchant's party into the hostile country was by no means imposing. The Principal walked in front at a quiet pace, with a certain air of good-humoured composure, lighting his cigar; Anthony close by his side; behind them, three stout carriers with the horses. They had approached to within about thirty paces of some peasants in white blouses, when the latter took up their weapons, and with the usual Polish cry, ordered them to stop. The Principal cried out to them in a loud voice, in their language, "Call your leader." One of the wild fellows at once obediently shouted to a distant troop with vehement gesticulations, the others held their guns in a threatening attitude, and with roguish looks aimed at Anthony, which it gave him no particular pleasure to observe. Meanwhile, the leader of the party approached with long strides. He wore a blue coat with coloured lace, a square red cap tipped with grey fur, and he held a long duck-gun in his hand. Take him altogether, a dark-looking fellow of dangerous aspect, ornamented with long black mustachios which hung down on both sides of his mouth. When he had come up to them, the merchant addressed him in a decided tone, in imperfect Polish, "We are your friends! I am master of the waggon there, and am come to fetch it; tell your men to help me, you shall have good beer money." At the sound of "beer money,"

the weapons were lowered, of their own accord, respectfully. The Cracovite chief, however, placed himself in the middle of the road, and began, in a deprecating tone, a long speech, accompanied with much gesticulation, of which Anthony understood very little, and the Principal only part, but which was interpreted by the carrier to this effect: that the man was sorry he could not help the gentlemen, but was ordered by a corps stationed farther off to watch the waggon until the horses arrived that were to take it to their town.

The merchant shook his head good-humouredly, and answered in a tone of quiet command, "That will not do, the waggon belongs to me, and I must take it with me, I cannot wait till your commander gives me leave!" upon saying which, he put his hand in his pocket, and, unseen by the others, offered the insurgent owner of the blue coat half-a-dozen silver thalers; "that for you, and as much for your men." The leader looked at the thalers, put his hand to his head, scratched energetically, and fumbled his cap about. At last he came to this conclusion: that such being the state of the case, the worthy gentleman might take away his waggon.

Triumphantly the party went up to the waggon: the carriers seized the levers, and, by their united strength, raised the fallen side, removed the broken pieces of the old wheel, and fastened on the new one, with the active co-operation of some of the peasants, and assisted with fraternal zeal by the leader himself. Then the horses were driven on briskly, and the waggon rolled towards the bridge, accompanied by loud shouts from the Cracovites, who perhaps tried to deafen some dissenting voice within them.

"Go forward with the waggon," said the merchant to Anthony; and when he hesitated to leave the Principal alone amongst the peasants, the latter added, in a commanding tone, "I wish you to do so." So the waggon drove slowly to the frontier, and Anthony heard already in the distance the laughing and salutations of the soldiers.

Meanwhile, the merchant and his interpreter remained in lively colloquy with the peasant leader, and parted from him at length on the best footing, and he, with true Slavonian courtesy, acted the landlord on the high road, and accompanied the travellers, cap in hand, till they came to within range of the soldiers. At the bridge the Principal overtook the waggon, passed through the "halt!" and "who goes there?" of the videttes, and all the necessary military ceremonies: and, arriving on his native land, received the laughing congratulations of the captain, whilst the lieutenant said ironically to Anthony, "You had no reason to regret your key pistols."

"It is better so," answered Anthony, "the thing went quite smoothly. The poor devils have stolen nothing but a small barrel of rum."

An hour after, the travellers were sitting in the small partition in the inn, with the officers of the hussars and rifles, over some bottles of old Hungarian wine, which the landlord had disinterred from the deepest corner of his cellar.

Anthony was not one of the least contented of the party. He had for the first time in his life gone through a decent amount of the dangers of war, and was, on the whole, satisfied with himself, and now he was seated by a young warrior, for whom he was disposed to

feel the highest respect, and he had the pleasure of offering him a cigar, and talking with him over the adventures of the day.

"The peasants aimed at you in the beginning," said the young gentleman, carelessly twirling his moustachios, "did you not feel rather uneasy?"

"Not very," replied Anthony, as coolly as possible. "For a moment I was a little staggered, when the barrels were pointing at us, and others behind the guns were pretending to cut off heads with their scythes. It gave me a turn when I saw all the mouth-pieces were directed at my face. Afterwards I was occupied with the waggon, and did not think any more about it. And when, on our return, each of the carriers maintained that he alone had been aimed at, I came to the conclusion that this universality must be a peculiar property of the gun-barrels, a kind of optical delusion, which was of no consequence."

"We should have rescued you if the peasants had been in earnest," answered the lieutenant, kindly. "Your cigars are good."

Anthony was delighted at this, and filled his neighbour's glass. Thus he talked on, occasionally looking at his Principal, who, on this occasion, seemed particularly inclined to discuss the question of peace or war with the gentlemen in uniform. Anthony perceived that the merchant treated the officers with a certain civil formality, which effectually checked the frivolous tone with which the young gentlemen had begun the evening. Soon the conversation became general, and they listened attentively to the merchant, who gave them information concerning the insurgent country, which he had become acquainted with in former journeys, and described to them the leaders of the insurrection.

The young Herr von Rothsattel alone, to Anthony's great sorrow, seemed displeased at the attention with which his comrades listened to the merchant, and with the lion share he had obtained in the conversation. He threw himself carelessly back in his chair, looked absently at the ceiling, played with the hilt of his sword, and occasionally dropped a short remark, to show how much he was bored. The captain mentioned that he expected the commander of the frontier corps next morning, and the merchant said in reply: "Your colonel will not arrive here before to-morrow evening, at least he told me so to-day when I met him on the railway," upon which the devil of pride in the young officer burst forth, and he said, rudely, "Then you know our colonel personally? Does he not buy his sugar and coffee of you?"

"He used to do so formerly," said the merchant, civilly; "I have myself, as a young man, weighed out the coffee for him."

The officers felt embarrassed, and one of the elder ones endeavoured, in a fashion, to make amends for this intentional rudeness, by speaking of it as a highly-respectable Firm, by which it was a pleasure to every one, whether military or civil, to be supplied.

"I thank you for the confidence you have in my Firm, captain," said the merchant, smiling; "I am, above all, proud that it has become respectable through my own exertions and those of my family."

"Lieutenant Rothsattel, you lead the next patrol, it is time for you to start," said the captain. The lieutenant rose, rattling his spurs.

"Stop, Herr Warschauer is bringing a new bottle, on which he sets great value; it is the best wine in his cellar; will not Herr von Rothsattel taste it before he goes to guard our night's rest?" asked the merchant, with a quiet civility, turning to the captain. The young gentleman thanked him haughtily, and went noisily out of the room. Anthony could have thrashed his favourite, so angry was he with him; the captain, however, diverted attention from the little interlude by entering into an animated conversation.

It was late, and Anthony saw, with astonishment, that the merchant continued to play the host, and seemed to find a pleasure in trying Hungarian wines, which was not exactly in character with the object of the journey. At last, after a new bottle had been uncorked, and the captain had enjoyed another of the merchant's cigars, the latter said, quietly; "I will go to-morrow to the capital of the insurgent country, and beg for your permission, if that is necessary."

"You will?" exclaimed the officers, all round the table.

"I must," said the merchant, seriously, and explained to them briefly why.

The captain shook his head: "It is true the words of my orders leave it uncertain whether I ought to close the boundary to every one, but the blockade of the disturbed country is the great object of our being posted here.

"Then I shall be obliged to apply to the commander, which will detain me more than a day, and this delay might frustrate the object of my journey. According to your account, as yet there is tolerable order reigning amongst the insurgents, but it is impossible it should last long. Upon that depends the possibility of my saving my goods, it being only with the consent of the revolutionary authorities that I can get my waggons out of the town."

"And do you hope to obtain this?" asked the captain.

"I must try," answered the merchant. "At all events I shall oppose the plunder and destruction of my property, to the best of my power."

The captain reflected a moment: "Your project puzzles me a little. If any misfortune happens to you, which I almost fear may be the case, I should be reproached for having permitted you to pass the frontier. Can nothing move you to give up this journey?"

"Nothing," answered the merchant, "nothing but the law."

"Are those waggons of so much importance that you will risk your life for them?" asked the captain, with some irritation.

"Yes, captain, of as much importance as your duty is to you; upon the possession of these waggons more than a commercial profit depends for me. I must go, unless a positive interdiction of the government prevents me. I must submit to that, but would first try all I could to be made an exception."

"Well," said the captain, rising, "I will not hinder your journey. Only you must give me your word of honour, that you will, under no circumstances, say anything over there regarding the strength of these frontier posts, the position of our troops, nor what you may have heard of our intended movements."

"I give you my word."

"Knowing who you are is sufficient warrant to me that your statements as to the object of your journey are true, but as a matter of

form, I wish to see your papers concerning it, if you have any with you."

"Here they are," said the merchant, in an equally business-like tone; "here is my passport for going abroad for a year, there the bill of lading of the Polish seller, the copies of his letters to the custom-house of the frontier and to the Commissioners, and their answers. The officers of the custom-house and the Commissioner can give evidence of the truth of my statements."

The captain persued the papers and returned them. "You are a brave man, and I wish you success," he said, with official dignity. "How do you think of travelling?"

"With post-horses. If they refuse me horses I shall buy them and drive myself; our landlord will let me have a carriage, and I shall travel to-morrow in the day-time, as it will excite less suspicion than at night."

"Then to-morrow, at day-break, I will see you again. I presume that in three days at the latest we shall march into the enemy's country. In case I should not have any news from you before that, I shall look out for you in the conquered town. Let us retire, gentlemen, we have had a long sitting."

The officers withdrew with military clatter, and Anthony and his Principal remained with the empty bottles alone in the room. The merchant opened the window and then turned to Anthony, who had listened to the last debate with great agitation. "We must separate here, dear Wohlfart," he began—

Before he could finish, Anthony seized his hand, and with tears in his eyes, said, "Allow me to go with you, do not send me back to the office. It would be to me, through my whole life, an unbearable reproach to have abandoned you on this journey."

"It would be useless, perhaps imprudent, if you were to accompany me. I can very well manage alone what there is to be done, and if there is any danger, which I do not expect, your presence will be no protection to me. I should only have the painful feeling of having brought another into trouble on my account."

"I should be most grateful to you, if you would take me," implored Anthony, still keeping hold of the Principal's hand. "Fraulein Sabine, too, wished it," he added, wisely bringing forward the strongest motive last.

"She is a timid girl," said the merchant, smiling. "Well, as you insist upon it so kindly, I consent; we will travel together; call the landlord and let us consult with him about the means of getting on."

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## CHAPTER II.

It was still dusk when Anthony stepped out of the door of the inn. A thick fog was hanging over the plain, and floated restlessly in the dawn of opening day. The glare of fires in the horizon marked the direction of their journey. The vapours of night still threw a grey veil over a dark mass in the foreground. Anthony approached nearer, and discovered a number of men, women, and children. They were cowering on the ground, with pale, hungry, and deeply furrowed faces.

"They are from the frontier village on the other side," said an old sergeant, who was standing near them, wrapped up in his cloak. "Their villages are burning and they fled into the woods. Last night they came up to the river, stretched out their hands, and cried lamentably for bread. As they are mostly women and children, the captain allowed them to cross, and had some loaves distributed to them. They are ravenously hungry. After them still larger bands arrived, all crying 'Bread, bread!' and wringing their hands. We fired some pistol-shots over their heads and so whistled them away."

"Truly," said Anthony, "that is a comfortable prospect for our journey. What is to become of these poor people?"

They are frontier devils," said the sergeant benignly, "half the year they smuggle and drink, and the other half they starve. These are rather frozen into the bargain."

"Could we not have a kettle of soup made for them?" asked Anthony, compassionately, putting his hand into his pocket.

"What is the use of soup? a draught of brandy would be more welcome to such a lot; down there everyone drinks brandy, even the sucking babes. If you wish to spend something on them, I will distribute it, not forgetting an honest soldier."

"I shall order the landlord to have something warm made for them, and mind, sergeant, you must be so kind as to see that it is all done properly." So saying he got out his purse, and the sergeant readily promised to keep his martial heart open to pity.

An hour after, the travellers were rolling in an open britschka past the advanced posts; the merchant was driving, and Anthony sat behind, looking with watchful eyes at the landscape, in which some isolated objects were already becoming visible out of the darkness and fog. They had gone about two hundred paces, when a Polish call was heard from behind a big willow-tree by the road side. The merchant stopped the horses, and a single individual approached the carriage, cautiously. "Get up, friend," the merchant cried out to the stranger, "and sit by me." The stranger doffed his cap courteously, and sprang up on the front seat of the carriage. It was the Cracovite leader of the day before with his long moustachios. "Have an eye on him," said Herr Schroeter to Anthony in English; "he shall serve as a safe-conduct to us, and be paid for it. If he should attempt to lay hands on me, do you attack him from behind."

Anthony took the despised pistols out of an old leather bag, and put them in the pocket of his great-coat, displaying them, as he did so, before the eyes of the Cracovite. The guide in the blouse smiled familiarly, and soon proved to be a fellow of sociable and friendly character; he nodded good-humouredly to the travellers, drank out of Anthony's canteen, and made attempts to begin a conversation with him over his left shoulder, calling him, "your honour," in broken German, and imparting to him that he smoked tobacco, but had none. At last he begged to have the honour of driving the gentlemen.

After a time they passed by a group of ruined houses, situated near a bog, on a bare plain, like huge toadstools shooting up in some poisonous place; when suddenly they saw themselves surrounded by a troop of insurgents. They were militia, like those they had seen the day before; they had flails, straightened scythes, old muskets, linen blouses, a strong smell of brandy, and goggle eyes. They laid hold of

the horses, and quick as lightning were preparing to unharness them; but the Cracovite rose from his seat like a lion, and addressed them in his own language, with wondrous eloquence, gesticulating in all directions with hands and feet. He explained that these gentlemen were great personages from the Niemey, who were going to the capital, having to carry on some important negotiation with the government, and that it would cost any one their head who dared to touch even a hair of their horses' tails. This declaration was followed by equally energetic counter-speeches, during which one part clenched their fists, and others took off their caps. Thereupon the leader delivered a still stronger speech, in which he gave the patriots a prospect of being quartered, if they ventured only to cast an evil eye on the horses. This diminished the number of the clenched fists, and increased that of the doffed hats. At length the merchant put an end to this scene by setting the horses off with a vigorous stroke of his whip, which compelled the last opposing patriot to make a rapid spring on one side. The horses galloped on, some lively ejaculations followed them, and a ball whizzed harmlessly over their heads, discharged, probably, more from a general sentiment of patriotism than with any special aim.

Thus they proceeded for some hours, frequently overtaking crowds of armed country people, who either screamed and brandished their cudgels, or followed a priest with religious banners, their heads bent down, singing hymns. The travellers were sometimes stopped, and threatened, but sometimes also treated with great respect, especially Anthony, who, sitting in the place of honour, was supposed to be the principal person.

At last they approached a large village, where the crowds became greater, and the screaming louder; amongst the blouses of the peasants were to be seen here and there a uniform, and tufts of feathers and bayonets became visible. Here their companion showed symptoms of anxiety, and informed the merchant he could not accompany them any further, and that they must present themselves to the commander. The Principal agreed, gave him his reward, and stopped the carriage when they came to the first party that occupied the road. A young man, in a blue dress, with a red and white scarf round his waist, hastened to them, desired the travellers to descend, and took them to the main guard. The merchant kept hold of the reins, and whispered to Anthony under no circumstances to lose sight of the carriage. Anthony feigned unconcern, and slid something into the hand of the faithful Cracovite, who was lingering behind the carriage, to procure some hay for the horses.

The guard was established in a house which had a thatched roof, and was distinguished by its whitewashed walls. There were a number of guns and muskets, piled up against wooden posts, watched by a young volunteer in a blue coat and red cap. The commanding officer was seated near—a broad face beneath a huge white plume; he was adorned with an immense silk scarf and a sword with a finely worked basket hilt. This gentleman was thrown into a state of uncommon excitement when he beheld the travellers; he pulled his hat down on his head, stroked his shaggy beard, and began an examination. According to agreement both travellers told him that they were going to head-quarters upon business of importance, but they

refused to give any information as to the object of their journey. This declaration offended the dignity of the commander; he made unpleasant allusions to suspicious characters and spies, and called out to his guard to look to their arms. Five young men in blue jackets rushed out of the house, formed in line, and were pompously ordered to have their arms ready. Anthony placed himself instinctively between the blue-coats and his Principal. Meanwhile the gentleman with the long sword seemed to change his bloody intentions, seeing the merchant remain coolly standing by the post to which he had fastened the reins. The commander contented himself with assuring him that he considered him a most dangerous person, and was disposed to have him shot as a traitor.

The merchant shrugged his shoulders, and said, with quiet courtesy, "You are entirely mistaken about the object of our journey. You cannot in earnest take us for spies, for we have by our own desire been brought here by one of your countrymen in order to obtain, through your kindness, an escort to the capital. I entreat you once more not to detain us, as our business at head-quarters is very urgent, and I must make you answerable for any unnecessary delay. At this speech the commander began again to storm, railing at the merchant and Anthony; at length he drank a large glass of brandy, and took his resolution. He summoned three of his men, and ordered them to get into the carriage with the travellers, and convey them to the capital. A fresh truss of straw was thrown into the carriage, and two ill-looking lads took their places, with their weapons, behind the travellers; a peasant, with a white blouse, sat before the men on the coach-box, seized the reins, and drove his cargo—suspects, patriots, etc., in a gallop to the capital.

"Our situation has become worse," said Anthony; "five persons in this little carriage, and the poor horses tired."

"I told you that our journey would be attended with some inconveniences," answered the merchant; "men are never more troublesome than when they play at soldiers. However, this escort is no misfortune; with such a passport, we shall at least get to the town."

It was evening when they reached the neighbourhood of the city. Whilst still at a distance, the red glow in the sky, and the numerous armed troops marching to and from the town, showed they were approaching the end of their journey. Then ensued a long delay at the gate, a confusion of questions and answers, an inspection of the travellers by the light of lanterns and blazing pine splints, hostile looks, and unintelligible threats, and finally a long drive through the streets of the old capital. Around them there was, now a deathlike stillness, and now wild cries of men gathering together, rendered more alarming from the words being unintelligible to the hearers.

At last the coachman turned into a market-place and stopped before a stately house. The travellers were dragged through a throng of gay uniforms, laced jackets, and light-coloured blouses, and up a wide flight of steps. There they were thrust into a large room, and placed in front of a gentleman with white kid gloves, who was perusing a written report, and laconically informed them, that according to the report of the commander of the detachment, they were suspected of being spies, and must be tried by a court martial. The merchant



answered immediately, with great indignation: "Then I am sorry to say your subordinate has reported a great falsehood, for we performed our journey in broad daylight, on the high road, with the express intention of speaking to your commander-in-chief; the carriage and the horses that brought me to this house are mine, and it was an unnecessary civility on the part of the officer in command of the detachment to give me such an escort. I wish to see the gentleman who commands here as soon as possible; to him only can I impart the object of my journey; have the goodness to hand him my passport."

The gentleman looked at the passport, and asked with more respect, looking at Anthony: "But who is this gentleman? he looks like an officer in your army."

"I am a clerk at Herr Schroeter's," answered Anthony, with a bow, "and a thorough civilian."

"Wait," said the young man, haughtily, and went with the passport into a side room.

As he was absent some time, and no one prevented them, the travellers seated themselves on a bench and assumed as great an air of indifference as they could. Anthony cast an anxious glance at the Principal, who was looking down gloomily, and then examined with surprise the objects about him. It was a lofty room, the ceiling ornamented with paintings, the walls covered with smoke and dust; tables, chairs, and benches, standing about in confusion, they seemed to have been brought there from some tavern. At the table were persons busily writing, and by the walls armed men were sitting and lying, some were sleeping, others talking loudly to one another, partly in French. The decayed-looking room, dimly lighted, had not a cheering effect upon Anthony, and he whispered to the merchant, "If a revolution bears this aspect, it looks ugly enough."

"It always brings on ruin, and seldom produces anything new: I fear the whole town will be like this room. Where such contrasts meet as the painted arras on the ceiling and the dirty bench on which we sit, an honest man may well cross himself. The nobles and the mob are each bad enough by themselves, when they take politics in hand; but when they unite, they are sure to ruin the house in which they meet."

"The grandees are more difficult to deal with than the others," said Anthony; "our Cracovite was a well-bred insurgent, and had a heart for an eight-groschen piece, but these gentlemen are not at all business-like."

"Let us wait to see that," said the Principal.

A quarter of an hour had elapsed, when a young man of slender figure and of distinguished aspect came out of the side room, followed by the gentlemen with the white gloves. He walked civilly up to the merchant, and said, in a voice loud enough for even the sleepers on the benches to hear, "I am glad to see you here, I have expected it; have the goodness to follow me with your companion."

"Zounds! our shares are rising," thought Anthony. They followed the dignified speaker into a small room, that might be called the boudoir of head-quarters, for it was provided with an ottoman, well-stuffed arm-chairs, and an elegant writing-table of rare wood. Sundry dresses and uniforms were lying in disorder upon the pieces of furni-

ture, and a beautiful, costly, inlaid pocket-pistol with two barrels, and a large seal with precious stones set in gold were lying near the papers on the table.

Whilst Anthony was making these observations on the mixture of elegance and disorder in the room, the young chief, with somewhat more dignity and suavity of manner, said to the merchant: "You have been exposed through a misunderstanding to rather rough treatment, which in turbulent times cannot always be avoided; your escort have confirmed your statement; I beg you to inform me what brings you here." The merchant explained concisely the object of his journey, mentioned the names of his correspondents in the town, and referred to them for the confirmation of his statement.

"I know some of these gentlemen," answered the chief, with a tone of indifference. Then after a pause, fixing his eyes sharply on the merchant, he asked: "Have you nothing further to communicate to me?"

The Principal assured him he had not, but the other continued rapidly: "I perfectly understand that in our exceptional position, your government cannot enter into direct relations with us, and that you must observe the strictest caution: if you are charged with any commission to us—"

The merchant interrupted him eagerly. "Before you proceed, I must assure you once more, as a man of honour, that I came only on my own affairs, and that I have no other business but what I have mentioned. But from your words, and also from much that I have heard on the road, I conclude that you take me for a plenipotentiary, no matter from whom; so I feel bound to tell you, that I could not come here with any commission, because such a commission as you seem to expect is impossible."

The distinguished young chief cast down his eyes with an expression of great seriousness, and after some moments of gloomy silence said: "No matter, you shall not suffer from it. The wish you have expressed to me is so extraordinary, [that no authority in the regular course of things could do it; if we are not allowed to consider you as friends, the duty of self-preservation bids us treat you as enemies, and deal with your property accordingly. But it is a virtue of my countrymen, only too fatal to them when they take up arms, to expect noble feelings in others, and to act nobly themselves, even where they cannot count upon gratitude. Be assured I shall do my best to get your property released,"

There was a lofty self-respect and dignity in the demeanour of the nobleman as he spoke, that made Anthony feel there was something truly noble in his words, but he was already too much of a man of business to yield entirely to this impression, and a thought fell like hoar frost on his budding admiration; "He promises us help, without having convinced himself that what we wish to take out of the town is really our own property."

"I regret that I have not sufficient power to fulfil your desires at once, but I hope to be able to obtain you a safe conduct for your waggons to-morrow morning. You will do well to endeavour yourself, forthwith, to find out where your property is; I will give you one of my officers as a protection. To-morrow morning you shall hear from me further."

So saying, he dismissed the travellers graciously, and Anthony observed, as he was going out, that the young commander seated himself wearily on a soft velvet chair, and with his head bent, played with the handle of his beautiful pistol.

A young man, still almost a boy, but with very confident manners, accompanied the travellers out of the house. As they went away, they were courteously saluted by several of the bystanders, and Anthony concluded that in the ante-room they were still considered as diplomatic characters. The officer asked where he should accompany the gentlemen, as his orders were not to leave them.

"To protect or to watch us?" asked Anthony, cheerfully, who was now quite in spirits.

"You will give me no occasion to consider myself as your guard," answered the young soldier in good French.

"No," said the merchant, regarding the youth with sympathy, "but we shall tire you, as we have to settle to-night some very uninteresting and common-place business."

"I am only doing my duty," answered their guide proudly, "in accompanying you wherever you desire."

"And we ours, by making haste," said the merchant.

The travellers walked rapidly through the streets of the town; it was night, but under her veil the wild scenes that were being enacted became still more terrible. Crowds of the dregs of the people, patrols of the army, and swarms of fugitive country people, crowded together pell-mell, screaming, cursing, and singing; there were lights in many of the windows, and the glare of the candles threw a shadowless, ghastly light across the streets. Thick red clouds of smoke rolled over the houses; one of the suburbs was on fire; the wind carried golden sparks and burning splints over the heads of the travellers, and the bells from the church towers tolled their monotonous laments, making awful melody. The travellers hastened silently on amidst the throng, the authoritative words of their companion opening them a way through the threatening crowd. At length they reached the house where the agent of the Firm was living; it was closed, and they had to knock for a good while before a window was opened, and a timid voice was heard through the noise, asking who was there.

When they entered, the agent ran up to them, wringing his hands, and fell upon the merchant's neck, weeping. The presence of the young officer prevented him from giving expression to his feelings; he took his visitors into his room, and with a doleful voice asked pardon for the dreadful confusion it was in. Trunks and boxes were packed, women and servants were running about frightened, here and there hiding silver spoons and chandeliers. Meanwhile, their host kept wringing his hands and pacing to and fro about the room, bemoaning his misfortune, and that of the Firm, blessing and deploring, in the same breath, the arrival of the merchant, and in the midst of it all vowing to the young warrior, in a suppressed voice, that he was a patriot, and that it was only by an unaccountable mistake of the housemaid that the cockade had been taken from the front of his house. It was obvious that the man and his whole family had lost their heads; and it was with some trouble and only by speaking very seriously to him, that the merchant succeeded, after getting him into

a corner of the room, in obtaining information about the business for which he had come. The loaded waggons had arrived in the town exactly on the day that the tumult had begun. By the caution of one of the waggoners, they had been sheltered in the large yard of a remote inn; what had since become of them, the agent did not know.

After a short conversation, the merchant said: "We will not ask your hospitality to-night, we will sleep where our waggons are." All the agent's remonstrances were in vain; the honest, but weak man, seemed quite afflicted at the new dangers to which his mercantile friend was exposing himself.

"To-morrow, at an early hour, I shall fetch you," said the merchant, at parting; "I intend to start with my waggons, and shall previously call on some of our customers, which you know is necessary, and it will be desirable for you to accompany me on these visits."

The travellers then resumed their night walk, guided by the Pole, who had listened with contempt to the half-whispered conversation. When again in the street, the Principal, throwing away his cigar, said indignantly to Anthony:

"Our friend will be of little use to us—he is as helpless as a child. He has neglected doing his duty at the beginning of these disturbances, which was to call in money, and look for security for our claims."

"And now no one will be disposed to pay or to give security," said Anthony.

"However, we must to-morrow endeavour to effect it, and you shall help me. These convulsions weigh heavily upon commerce; they paralyze every kind of industry that preserves men from becoming brutes. But if a commercial man is too much disturbed by these things he does an injury to civilization—an injury which may never be repaired."

They now reached a quarter of the city where the empty streets and deathlike silence contrasted strangely with the distant noise and fiery sky. At last they stopped before a low building with a large gateway. They entered, and looked into the tap-room, a dirty place with blackened rafters, where brawling patriots were sitting, crowded on benches and tables, drinking brandy.

The young officer stopped on the threshold, and called for the host. A fat figure with a red face dived from out of the smoke which enveloped the bar.

"In the name of the government, a room for myself and my companions," demanded the officer. The publican sulkily took a bunch of rusty keys, and a tallow candle, and conveyed the guests up stairs; there he opened the door of a musty room, saying, in a surly tone, he had no other room for visitors.

"Get us some supper and a bottle of your best wine," said the merchant; "we will pay you well, and at once."

This intimation visibly improved the fat landlord's mood, and he began even to put on an appearance of civility. The merchant now inquired after the carriers and the waggons. These queries went very much against the grain with the landlord; first he endeavoured to know nothing, and declared a great many waggons had come into his yard, and also a number of carriers, but he did not know them.

In vain the merchant tried to make him understand the object of

his coming; the publican remained obdurate, and relapsed again into surly rudeness, till the young Pole interposed, and observed to the merchant that this was not the way to talk to such fellows. He then went up to the man, and calling him dog, rascal, and sundry other such names, swore to arrest him on the spot, and have him off to prison, if he did not give the most precise information.

The publican leered slyly at the officer, and at last offered to go down and send up some of the carriers.

Shortly after, a tall fellow, with a brown felt hat, noisily ascended the stairs, started at the sight of the merchant, and at last said, with constrained civility, "Here I am."

"Where are the waggons and the bills of lading?"

The waggons had been driven into the yard, and the bills of lading were slowly drawn forth from the dirty leather bag of the carrier.

"Can you answer for your cargo being complete and uninjured?" asked the merchant.

The felt hat answered sulkily he could not answer for it; the horses had been unharnessed from the waggons, and concealed in some remote stable, that they might not be seized by the government. He could not tell what might have happened to the waggons; there was an end of all responsibility in the midst of such confusion.

"We are in a den of thieves," said the merchant to his guide; "I beg for your assistance to keep these people in order."

Keeping others in order was exactly what the young Pole considered his forte. Smiling, he took his pistol in his hand, and said civilly to Anthony, "Do the same as I do, and pray follow me." Thereupon he laid hold of the carrier by the collar, and dragged him like a dead hare down stairs to the entrance hall. "Where is the landlord?" he shouted out with the most tremendous voice he could; "that dog of a landlord; and a lantern!" When at length the lantern was brought, he led the whole convoy—strangers, captured carrier, and fat landlord, and those who had assembled at the noise—into the yard. There he stopped, placed his prisoner in the centre of a circle, bestowed some more opprobrious names on the landlord, thumped the carrier's head with the butt end of his pistol, and then said to the merchant politely in French, "That fellow's skull sounds remarkably hollow; what do you wish first from these ninnies?"

"Will you have the kindness to collect the carriers?"

"Well," said the Pole, "and what next?"

"I will then examine the cargo of the waggons, if that is possible in the dark."

"Everything is possible," said the Pole. "If you are disposed to bother yourself with examining that old canvas, I would advise you to take a bottle of Sauterne and some hours' rest. In such times as these one must not lose an opportunity of refreshing oneself."

"I should prefer looking over the waggons at once," answered the merchant, smiling, "if you have no objection."

"I am on duty," said the Pole; "on with the work then; there are hands enough here to hold the lights for you."

"You cursed rogues," he continued in Polish, giving some more cuffs to the carrier, and again threatening the landlord, "I shall take all of you along with me, and have a court-martial on you, if you do not directly bring here the other carriers of this gentleman."

"How many are there?" he asked the merchant in French.

"There are fourteen waggons," answered the other.

"There must be fourteen," thundered out the Pole again to the people. "The devil shall torment your grandmothers if you don't at once produce them here before this gentleman."

With the help of an old ostler, a dozen carriers were at last dragged in, two were not to be found; and the landlord owned at last that they had joined the army of the patriots.

The Pole appeared not to attach much value to this patriotism. Turning to the merchant he said, "There are the men; examine the cargo. If only one piece is wanting, I shall have the whole set before a court-martial." So saying, he seated himself, with an air of indifference, on the pole of one of the waggons, and eyed the points of his dirtied varnished boots by the light of the lantern.

A number of lanterns and torches were brought, and after some cheering words from the merchant, the carriers entered the kind of bulwark formed by the waggons gathered together in the large yard, rolled some empty waggons on one side, and opened a way to their cargo. Most of them had formerly been in the merchant's service, and knew him and Anthony personally; some of them showed zeal and good will: and whilst the merchant applied for information, and examined and cross-questioned the most intelligent of them, Anthony endeavoured, as far as possible in the hurry, to investigate the state of the cargo, consisting chiefly of wool and tallow.

Several of the waggons were untouched, one was entirely emptied, and others were deprived of their covers, and partly plundered. The merchant went up to the young Pole and said, "It is as we supposed: the landlord has persuaded some of the men that in this time of revolution all the obligations of duty have ceased; and they had commenced to unload the cargo into a neighbouring house. If we had come a day later all would have been gone. The landlord and some of his associates were the contrivers of this, and part of the carriers were frightened by threats."

This report was followed by a new edition of oaths from the mouth of the young potentate. The landlord, from whose cheeks every drop of blood had vanished, fell on his knees before the officer, who held him fast by the hair, which he tore off in a most terrific way. Meanwhile Anthony, with some of the carriers, attacked the closed coach-house, broke open the door, and brought to light bags of wool and other stolen goods.

"Make the men reload them; they must work all night as a punishment," said the merchant.

After some resistance the carriers obeyed, overcome by a mixture of threats and promises.

The Pole drove the drunken guests of the tap-room out of the house, caused the outer door to be shut, and all the lights in the house to be carried into the yard. Then he dragged the landlord up stairs by the hair, and there, with the help of some benevolent patriots with large cockades, who had been among the guests in the tap-room, he had him fastened to a bed-post; and informed him that for that night he should have no claim to any other situation in his bed-room. "In case the goods are all found and got safe out of your house, you may be forgiven, otherwise you shall be tried and shot."

Meanwhile there was a constant rattling and clinking in the yard, and men's voices were heard screaming eagerly to one another. Anthony had the waggons loaded, and the cargo fastened. In his zeal for his work he scarcely looked about him, and only gave an occasional thought to the strange scene that surrounded him, and the adventurous circumstances in which he was placed.

They were in a large, square court-yard, enclosed by low, ruinous wooden buildings, stables, and cart-sheds; and there were two entrances, one through the house itself, the other opposite. It was a space of some acres, such as may frequently be found adjoining the inns in the east of Europe, which are situated on the main communications, or like the caravansaries of the East, intended to give shelter to great caravans and large numbers of men rapidly collected together.

All kinds of vehicles were drawn up in the yard, forming a great square, and there was a medley of ladders, poles, wheels, large hampers, grey canvas covers, trusses of hay and straw, old pitch-boxes, and moveable cribs, all huddled together.

Besides the stable lanterns and blazing torches, the red glow of the sky gave them light; and the thick clouds of smoke and brilliant sparks of the conflagration still floated over their heads; here, at least, this strange twilight lighted up a work of peace. The carriers were zealously at work, and cheered loudly; a crowd of dark figures, now disappeared in the shadow of the bales and waggons, and now sprang on the top of them, their lively gesticulations in the red light giving them the appearance of savages who were performing some mysterious night-work,

The merchant went to-and-fro between the yard and their room, and Anthony tried in vain to persuade him to take a few hours' repose

"This is not a night for us to sleep," he said, gravely. And Anthony saw, in the gloomy looks of his Principal, the determination of a man who is ready to risk all to carry out his will.

It was near daybreak when the last huge pack of wool was fastened with ropes and chains on the waggon. Anthony, who had himself been at work, glided down and announced to the Principal, "We are ready!"

"At last," answered the merchant, drawing a deep breath; and went upstairs to give the intelligence to his kind escort. The latter had spent the night in his own way; first he had consumed, with a good appetite, the supper and wine which, at his orders, were brought to him by the frightened damsels of the inn, and then gave them a dignified embrace, and spoke a few cheering words to them. He next examined the dirty beds; and finally threw himself on one of them, with a French curse, looking with perfect indifference on the pinched face of the knavish landlord, who was sitting opposite to him on the floor. For some time he gazed drowsily on the ceiling, complimented the merchant, who came several times into the room, on his ingenious way of passing a sleepless night, and at last fell into a sound sleep. At least the merchant found him so in the morning, stretched out on the coarse linen, his long black hair forming a frame to his delicate features, his small hands folded, and a sweet smile on his lips. There he lay, a fair representation of the aristocracy of his race, he himself

a noble child, with the passions, and, perhaps, sins of manhood; and in front of him the coarse figure of the fettered plebeian, who feigned to sleep also, but frequently cast malicious glances on the other.

The young nobleman sprang up when the merchant approached the bed: he opened the window, and said, "Good day to you; it is morning. I have slept well." Then he called to a patrol passing by, informed the leader of the state of affairs, consigned to him the rest of the supper and the landlord, and without any further explanations ordered him to guard the house with his men till he should return. After this he desired the carriers to harness the horses, and then led the travellers out of the house, in the dawn of a dreary day.

On their way to the agent, the merchant said to Anthony, "We will divide between us the most pressing visits; tell our customers that we by no means intend to press upon them; that till order is restored they may reckon upon the greatest consideration and indulgence, indeed, under some circumstances, on an increase of their credit; all we ask now is security. We cannot, in all this confusion, obtain much; but it is worth half our arrears to remind these gentlemen to-day of our Firm."

He added in a whisper, "This city is doomed by fate; we shall do little more business here in future; don't forget that, and be firm."

Then, turning to the Pole, he said, "I beg you to allow my companion to accompany our agent on some business."

"If your agent will be answerable, in his own person, for the return of the gentleman, I will consent," answered the Pole, with some hesitation.

Daylight, which has the beautiful property of giving colour to the flowers, and courage to the fearful, restored, also, self-possession to the agent. He declared himself ready to go out with Anthony.

Under the protection of the large cockade which the agent wore on his hat, Anthony hastened from house to house. His face was pale after his restless night; but his heart was resolute. He was received everywhere with a surprise not always unmingled with fear. "How could people think, at such a time, about arranging business, in the midst of all the sounds of alarm-bells and the terrors of a dreadful future?"

Anthony answered coolly, "Our Firm does not intend to mind these war alarms, unless compelled to do so. All times are good enough for the performance of one's duties. If it was possible for us to come here, it is equally so for you to transact business with me."

By these and similar representations, he succeeded in obtaining here and there positive promises and offers, and even some payments.

After some hours of strenuous exertion, Anthony met the Principal again, at the agent's house. When he had made his report, the merchant, shaking hands with him, said, "If we succeed in getting our waggons safe out of the town, we shall have rescued enough to be able to meet the unavoidable losses we shall suffer in this place. Now let us go to the government-house."

He then gave the agent more instructions, and whispered to him on leaving, "In a few days our troops will be here; till then, I presume you will not leave your house, and we shall meet again."

The agent raised his hands, and called upon all the powers of



heaven to protect the travellers, closed and bolted the house doors behind them, and hid his revolutionary cockade in the stove.

The travellers, under the escort of the Pole, hastened, with rapid steps, through the crowd. The streets were again thronged. Again troops of armed men passed them; the mob were wilder and more excited, and the noise was louder than the night before. They thundered at the doors of the houses, and demanded to be let in; brandy barrels were rolled along the pavement, surrounded by thick masses of drunken men and women. Everything proved that the governing power was not strong enough to maintain discipline in the streets. Even in the house of the commander-in-chief anxiety and agitation seemed to prevail; armed men rushed in and out: and the news they brought was evidently unfavourable, for, in the large ante-room, there was much eager talking and whispering; and there was a look of uneasy suspense on all countenances.

The young Pole, on his entrance, was surrounded by his friends, and taken into a corner. After some hasty questions, he seized a musket, called to some persons by name, and left the room without taking further notice of the travellers.

The merchant and Anthony were shown into the adjoining room, where they were received by the young commander-in-chief, who also looked pale and downcast, but maintained his distinguished bearing, as he addressed Herr Schroeter. "I have obtained your wish; here is a safe-conduct for you and your waggons. I beg you to observe from this, that we wish to treat the citizens of your state with all consideration, more, perhaps, than is advisable for our own self-preservation."

The merchant received the precious paper with beaming eyes.

"You have shown me great consideration," he said. "I feel myself under deep obligations to you, and hope I may some day be permitted to prove my gratitude."

"Who knows?" answered the young chief, with a sad smile; "he who risks all may lose all."

"Much," said the merchant, with a bow; "but not all, if one exerts oneself honourably."

At that moment a dull sound reached the ears of the speakers, a noise like the blast of the howling wind, or the roaring of a rising flood. The commander stood motionless and listened. Suddenly a discordant shriek as from many voices was heard close by, succeeded by some shots. Anthony, who, by long watching and suspense, had become nervous, shrank back, and the hand in which the Principal held the safe-conduct trembled. The door of the room was dashed open, some distinguished-looking men rushed in with torn clothes and weapons in their hands, on their terrified faces might be seen traces of the struggle in the streets, at their head was the guide of the travellers.

"Rebellion!" shouted out the young Pole to his commander, "they are seeking you!—save yourself!—I will keep them back."

Swift as thought Anthony darted up to his Principal, and dragged him away, and both flew across the ante-room, down the stairs into the entrance-hall. Here they met with a troop of armed men, who made a last effort to keep the ground against the rush of the multitude outside the house. But quick as the travellers were, their companion of the preceding night was quicker still in gliding down the stairs: he

rushed to the head of his friends, and, with them, threw himself against the raging mob. His black hair floated wildly about his bare head; in his handsome but now colourless face, his eyes shone with the irresistible energy of a gallant man. "Back there!" he shouted out, with a ringing voice, to the savage mob, and sprang like a leopard from the steps of the entrance, far into the crowd, striking his assailants with the flat of his sword, and the mass of the people recoiled, and the companions of the gallant youth ranged themselves behind him ready for action. Again Anthony seized the arm of the Principal and dragged him away from the house, with a vigour which men only possess when they irresistibly follow an overwhelming instinct. They had already turned a corner of the building, when a shot was fired, and they saw, with terror, the young Pole fall bleeding on his back, and heard his last cry, "The canaille!"

"To the waggons!" the merchant cried, turning rapidly into a narrow by-street. From the distance they still continued to hear stray shots and the cries of the combatants. The travellers pushed through the crowds of curious and frightened inhabitants, who stopped their course through remote streets, and arrived breathless at the inn, fearing the worst.

Here also the insurrection had broken out. The guard left there had released the landlord and retired, as soon as the report of the tumult reached them. Now the court-yard was filled with strife and noise. The landlord, supported by a number of the rabble, was in violent discussion with the carriers. One portion of the waggons had the horses put to; from others the covers were torn off, a troop of carriers, evidently the minority, stood before them, and opposed themselves to the pressure of the landlord and his band. It was a desperate situation. The merchant disengaged himself from Anthony, who tried to hold him back, rushed into the middle of the crowd of combatants, and shouted out, in Polish, raising up the safe conduct, "Hold! here is the order of the commander-in-chief that our waggons shall be allowed to leave the town. Whoever opposes it will be punished; we are under the protection of the government."

"What government, you rogue of a German?" bawled out the landlord, with a flushed face; "the old government is good for nothing; these traitors have been served right, and you spies shall hang also." At the same time he assailed the merchant, and aimed a blow at his defenceless head.

Anthony was horror-struck; but, as men in the most critical moments often conceive the strangest ideas, that dart like shooting stars across the darkness of an agitated mind, so it suddenly occurred to Anthony, that the broad shoulders of the landlord bore a striking resemblance to the back of a fat schoolfellow at Ostrau, a baker's good-humoured son, on whom, in their school-fights, he had often exercised his boyish skill, contriving, by a certain pressure and jerk from behind, to lay him flat on the ground. He sprang like lightning behind the publican, with the strength of a giant seized him by the neck, and gave him the skilful jerk, crying out involuntarily, "You scoundrel!" The descending sword lost its dangerous direction; it struck only the merchant's arm, tore the coat, and inflicted a wound, from which the blood gushed out. Whilst the fat fellow was lying on

his back, struggling like a beetle, Anthony again drew his trusty pistols out of his pocket, and shouted, with desperate energy, "Back there, you scoundrels! or I will shoot him dead!"

This sudden diversion worked more effect than in the state of things could have been hoped for; the rabble whom the publican had collected out of his tap-room, and who were merely acting for the interest of another, recoiled, and half-a-dozen carriers with poles and other weapons of offence, surrounded the merchant, and shouted now as loud as the others did before, declaring that they would not suffer the foreign gentleman and his waggons to be touched. The merchant called out, "Drive the strangers away!" and seizing the sword of the prostrate landlord, pressed on, at the head of his faithful supporters, against the assistants of the publican, and drove them through the paved hall. Some of the most obstinate made a fruitless attempt to maintain themselves in the tap-room, but one after the other were forced out of the door, and marched off howling and swearing. The house-door was then locked, and the merchant hastened back into the court-yard, where Anthony was still kneeling over the incorrigible landlord, preventing him from getting up. The remainder of the carriers had timidly withdrawn, and the merchant now summoned them all and ordered the horses to be put to. To Anthony he said, "We must at once leave this house, it is better to be in the streets than in such a den."

"You are bleeding," exclaimed Anthony, terrified, looking at Herr Schroeter's arm.

"It must be trifling, as I can move the arm," answered the merchant, quickly. "Open the back gate, and out with the waggons; forwards, my men! One of the carriers shall help to hold the publican fast."

"And where are we to go?" inquired Anthony, in English. "Are we to take the waggons into the midst of the bloody struggle in the streets?"

"We have a safe-conduct, and shall leave the town," replied Herr Schroeter, obstinately.

"They won't respect it," returned Anthony, still holding his pistol to the head of the publican.

"In the worst case, there are more inns in this quarter: any other will be a better refuge than this."

"But there are not the full number of carriers, and some are ill-disposed."

"The ill-will of single individuals I can get the better of," answered the merchant, gloomily; "the teams are complete; it is only some of the drivers who are missing; those who have their own horses are true to their duty. The gate is open—off with the waggons."

"The back gateway opened into an open place, covered with rubbish and stones for building, and surrounded by some wretched houses. Herr Schroeter hastened to the gate, and urged on the departure: a stout lad left his horse to assist Anthony; it was an anxious moment. Near the house Anthony and his assistant were struggling with the man on the ground, and his ugly wife and the two maid-servants were screaming at the door. When the first waggon drove through the gate, the shrieks of the women increased, the landlady cried out "Murder!" and "Help!" and the maids only howled the

more violently, the more the young carrier assured them that the landlord would not be hurt provided he would remain quiet, and that his score should be paid.

Suddenly thundering knocks were heard against the front door, which was closed; the women rushed to open it; and so great had been the hopeless suspense of the last few minutes, that Anthony saw with a certain degree of satisfaction a strong detachment of armed men enter the court. He rose from the ground and let the publican free. The merchant went slowly, with faltering steps, to meet the party, who at this critical moment had come to stop his movements.

The leader of the band, one of the patrol whom the young PoLe had called into the inn in the morning, said to the merchant, "You are a prisoner of the government: you and your goods are not to leave the town."

"I have a safe-conduct," the merchant replied, feeling for his pocket-book.

"The new government forbids your departure," rejoined the leader, sharply.

"I must submit," said the merchant.

He seated himself mechanically on the shaft, and supported himself with both hands against the body of the waggon.

Anthony took the half-unconscious man into his arms, and called out in the greatest agitation, "We have been robbed twice in this inn, have been in danger of being killed, and my companion is wounded; if your government will retain us and the waggons, let us at least protect our lives and these goods which are ours. In this inn the waggons cannot be left, and if you separate us from them it will be still more difficult to prevent their being plundered and destroyed."

The armed men collected together and held council, and at last the leader called Anthony. After a long debate, it was settled that the waggons should be driven to a neighbouring inn of a somewhat better character, and Anthony obtained permission to remain with Herr Schroeter at the same place, but in custody, until something further was settled. The merchant had been sitting, in the meanwhile, leaning against the canvas of the waggon, taking no part in what was going on, and Anthony informed him of the result of the negotiation.

"We must bear it," said the Principal, slowly, endeavouring with great difficulty to get up. "Ask the landlord for our bill."

"He will receive his pay from us," said the leader of the troop, pushing the landlord roughly aside. "Think of yourself now," he added, with sympathy, taking the arm of the wounded man, in order to support him.

"Pay for us and for the horses," repeated the merchant, turning to Anthony; "we must not remain in debt here."

Anthony took out his pocket-book, called the carriers together, gave the publican a bank-note before their eyes, and said to him, "I pay you this sum on account until your bill can be settled; these men are my witnesses;" the carriers nodded respectfully and hastened to their waggons.

The train began to move: in front a division of the escort; then the waggons, rumbling slowly and clumsily over the pavement of the gateway, some without drivers, but the well-trained horses followed

in file. The merchant stood at the gate, leaning on Anthony, and counted, in a low voice, as if dreaming, each waggon as it passed the gate. When the last had gone by he said, "They are all right!" and then followed, supported by Anthony and the Pole.

In the next cross street the procession moved into the large courtyard of another inn, and after a long delay, when the horses had all been taken out, and the guard had fastened the gate, the merchant fainted, and was carried into the house.

They laid the wounded man down in a small room, the Pole placed a sentry at the door of the travellers' room, and another in the yard; and Anthony was left alone with the unconscious man. Anxiously he knelt down by his couch, opened his dress, and sprinkled his face with cold water. After a while consciousness returned; he opened his eyes, and casting a grateful glance upon Anthony, pointed to the window.

Anthony looked out, and said joyfully, "It looks upon the court; I can count the waggons and can watch them. Here I think we are in tolerable safety, though to be sure we are prisoners. But first allow me to look after your wound; your clothes are covered with blood."

"The weakness comes more from over-exertion than from loss of blood," said the merchant, rising.

Anthony opened the door and begged that a surgeon might be sent for. The guard consented, and after a long and anxious hour, a shabby individual was ushered in, who hastily took out a razor and dirty pocket-handkerchief, whetted the razor on his sleeve, and placed the handkerchief in suspicious proximity with Anthony's chin. With difficulty he was made to understand what he was called for. Anthony ripped open the sleeves of the coat and shirt, and examined the wound himself: it was a cut on the upper part of the arm, and did not appear to be deep, but the arm was stiff and the merchant suffered much pain. The barber tried to dress it and went away, with the promise of returning the next day. Exhausted with the pain produced by the bandage, the merchant sank back on the couch, and Anthony sat by him the rest of the day, applying bandages of cold water to the arm, and watching the feverish slumber of the patient. Soon he himself fell into a state of drowsiness, which made him unconscious of all that took place outside the room. Thus the evening and the night passed. Anthony was constantly dipping his hand into cold water, sometimes gliding from the bed to the window, to look after the waggons, or to the door to exchange some words in a whisper with the sentry, who showed a kind-hearted sympathy. Meanwhile fire raged in the town, and outside the gates thundered the guns of the attacking troops. Anthony looked indifferently on the blazing flames, which, driven by the wind, spread over the unhappy town; he listened with faint surprise to the thunder of the artillery, which rolled louder and louder, till at last it became a deafening roar; and when he heard woeful cries or yells in the street, it sounded to him as unimportant as the tolling of the morning bell, that he used to hear from his room in the Principal's house, and which was not capable of disturbing any one, except, perhaps, some devout old woman. He went on mechanically the whole night long, bathing the patient's arm with cold water, and only roused himself if the latter groaned or stirred. But when, towards morning, the patient fell into

a quiet slumber, Anthony also forgot his task, his head sank heavily down on his hands, which were spread upon the table; he neither saw nor heard anything more, he had fallen sound asleep, like a weary boy over his school-task, amidst the screams and cannonade announcing the taking of a town, which had been gallantly defended.

When, after some hours, he awoke, the day had long broken; the merchant smiled at him kindly from his bed, and held out to him his sound hand. Anthony pressed it joyfully, and hastened again to the window: "All right!" he exclaimed, and then opened the door. The sentry had disappeared in the street; they heard beating drums and the measured tread of marching regiments.

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### CHAPTER III.

"We had quite given you up," exclaimed the captain to the merchant, as he entered. "There has been bad work here, and my inquiries about you were vain; it was good luck that your letter reached me in this confusion."

"We have accomplished our wishes," said Herr Schroeter, "though not without obstacles, as you see,"—and he pointed smiling to his wounded arm.

"First of all, let me know what adventures you have encountered," replied the captain, sitting down by him; "you can show more marks of the combat than we can." The merchant related what had passed: he dwelt with warmth on the heroic deed of Anthony, to which he owed his safety, and concluded with these words: "My wound will not prevent my travelling, and urgent business requires my immediate return. I shall take the waggons with me as far as the frontier."

"To-morrow morning part of our baggage is going back there, and your waggons may join it. However, the high roads are now so safe that to-morrow the post will resume its course."

"Meanwhile, I will request your assistance; I wish to send an express home to-day with letters."

"I will provide for that, and your return shall not be delayed to-morrow."

When the officer had left the room, Herr Schroeter said to Anthony, "I must prepare you, dear Wohlfart, for what I fear will not be agreeable to you: I wish to leave you here in my stead."

Anthony, much surprised, approached the bed of the Principal, who continued, "Our agent is not to be depended upon in these times, and I have learnt with pleasure, during the late events, how much you are to be trusted. I shall never forget, as long as I live, your exertions in saving my life.—Now take your memorandum-book, and sit down by me; we will once more talk over what we have to do."

The following morning a post-carriage appeared at the inn-door: the merchant, supported by Anthony, got into it, and having caused it to be driven to the side of the street, watched the waggons one after the other passing through the gate. He then pressed Anthony's

hand once more, and said: "Your sojourn here will last weeks, perhaps months; your work will be very unpleasant, and sometimes without any result. I must repeat to you, be not too anxious; I rely on your judgment as on my own; do not be afraid of injuring us by calling on doubtful debtors for payment; this place is in a state of desolation, and is lost to us for the future. Farewell till we meet happily at home."

So Anthony remained alone in a foreign town, with great trust reposed in him, and great responsibility. He returned to his room, called the landlord, and made a bargain with him for his lengthened stay. The town was so crowded with soldiers, that he was obliged to content himself with the small lodging he had hitherto occupied, and put up with the inconvenience of such scanty quarters.

It was, indeed, a desolate town through which he was now walking. Only a few days before the streets were filled with the throng of furious men, every sort of ambitious passion was to be read on those fierce countenances. Where was now the pride, the warlike ardour, the enthusiasm of thousands? the crowds of peasants, the swarm of rabble? The soldiers of the patriotic army had vanished like ghosts before the beating drums of the foreigner. The men who paced the streets were foreign soldiers, but the gay uniform of the strangers did not improve the aspect of the town. The fire, indeed, was extinguished, the smoke of which had for some days darkened the sky; but, in the pale light of autumn, the houses looked as if they were burnt out, the doors remained closed, many panes in the windows were broken, the streets were covered with mud, rotten dirty straw, ruined furniture, here the broken wheels of a cart, there uniforms, weapons, and dead horses. At one corner of the street stood chests and barrels which had been collected together out of the houses to form a last rampart against the entrance of the town, and behind them, the bodies of men were lying only slightly covered with straw. Anthony turned away with a shudder when he caught sight of the livid faces from under it. In the square, newly-arrived troops were bivouacking, their horses stood coupled together in groups; and by their side were mounted pieces of ordnance. In all the streets the tread of strong patrols was to be heard, only now and then a person in the costume of a civilian hastened across the pavement, with hat slouched over the eyes, casting frightened glances at the foreign troops; sometimes a pallid man was led along by soldiers, and, if he walked too slowly, was pushed on by the butt ends of their muskets. The town wore a dreadful aspect during the insurrection, but a far worse one now that the stillness of death lay upon it.

When Anthony returned, with these impressions on his mind, from his first walk, he found a hussar at his door, marching to and fro with heavy steps like a sentry.

"Herr Wohlfart!" the hussar cried out, rushing to meet him.

"My dear Karl," exclaimed Anthony, "this is the first pleasure I have experienced in this wretched city. But how do you come here?"

"You know, of course, that I am serving my time. We joined our comrades at the frontier a few hours after you had left it. I heard of your departure from the landlord, who knew that I had belonged to the Firm. You may imagine what anxiety I felt about

you. This is the first day I have got leave, and by good luck I happened to ask one of the carriers at the door, or I should not have found you out! And now, first of all, Herr Wohlfart, how is our Principal? and what has become of our goods?"

"First come to my room," answered Anthony, "and you shall hear all."

Karl was furious with the bad landlord. "The thievish dog! how dared he touch the goods of our Firm, and attack our chief! But mark, to-morrow I will take a whole troop of our lads to his inn. He shall be driven into his own courtyard, posted there as a wooden horse, and we will jump over him for a whole hour, one after the other, and at every leap he shall have a thump on his wicked head."

Herr Schroeter has pardoned him," said Anthony, soothingly, "don't you be more severe. You have grown up a fine lad."

"Passably," answered Karl, flattered. "I reconciled myself after a time to the farming. My uncle is a good man. If you can fancy my old man half as tall as he is, thin instead of fat, with a long face instead of a round one, a turn-up nose instead a high one, with a dun-coloured coat, and without a leather apron, but with a pair of high jack boots, you have my uncle just as he is, a fine little fellow, who intends well by me. In the beginning, it was rather too quiet for me in the country, and there were too many Polish folk in the neighbourhood; but it improved in the course of time. In farming, one always sees the result of one's labour, which is a great pleasure. My becoming a soldier was a great disappointment to my grey-headed uncle: to me it was no small satisfaction to find myself in good earnest mounted on a horse, and able to see something of the scuffle. Wretched farming hereabouts, Herr Wohlfart, and what shocking havoc in this place!" Thus Karl chattered on cheerfully; at last he took up his cap, saying, "If you remain here, allow me sometimes to call on you for a quarter of an hour."

"You shall do as if you were at home, and if you should not happen to find me here, the landlord will give you the key: this is the place where I keep my cigars!"

But Karl was not the only acquaintance that Anthony had amongst the hussars. The captain took a liking to his young countryman, who had stood so gallantly against the insurgents. He introduced him to the colonel in command of the detachment, who made Anthony tell his adventures, which were listened to with great approbation by a large circle of officers, and a few days after the captain invited him to dinner, to meet the officers of his squadron. Anthony's modest, quiet manners made a favourable impression on these gentlemen; in garrison they would probably have been prevented, by certain views concerning dignity of position, from holding familiar intercourse with a young mercantile man; but here on active service, they were more high-minded than in the busy monotony of peace, their prejudices were less, and they were ready to acknowledge the courage and worth of others. So they soon pronounced the young gentleman from the office a d——d good fellow: they got into the habit of calling him by his Christian name in jest, and when they drank their coffee, or played at dominoes in the coffee-room, they invited Anthony into their circle. Some vague reports of the civilian



having great possessions, and some extraordinary relationship, emerged out of the darkness of former years; but to do the officers justice, it was no longer the principal reason for the attentions they bestowed upon their fellow-countryman. Anthony felt more elated by this slight connection with the chivalrous young men than he would have liked to own, either to himself or Herr Pix; he enjoyed having this free intercourse with men of high pretensions, and felt himself on a par with many whom he had hitherto, from his office, looked upon with awe. Ancient recollections were revived, and again he felt attracted by the magic of a society which appeared to him so easy and brilliant. Even Lieutenant von Rothsattel soon became one of his friends; Anthony treated him with the most delicate attention, and the lieutenant, a spoiled, light-hearted, good-humoured youth, was pleased with Anthony's marked preference, and rewarded him with his intimacy.

Anthony's indispensable business saved him from losing, in the society of his new friends, his self-dependence. The city was indeed a desolate place; the wild intoxication of the struggle had passed away, but peaceable activity was paralyzed. The daily necessities of life were dear, and few only could find employment. Many who had formerly worn boots walked barefoot, and those who in other times would have bought a new coat, had a patch put on the old one; the tailor and the boot-maker had water-gruel for their breakfast instead of coffee and sugar, the shopkeeper did not pay his debts to the merchants, and the merchants could not fulfil their obligations to other mercantile houses. Whoever had now to reclaim money from those who were deploring their losses, had a hard task, and Anthony learnt this by experience. Everywhere he heard complaints which were only too well founded; in many places all kinds of expedients were resorted to, to escape from his urgency. Daily he passed through painful scenes, was often obliged to have lengthy agreements drawn up by a lawyer, in Polish, in which he felt much at a loss, although the agent acted as interpreter. The commercial class, with whom Anthony had to deal, was, indeed, a varied community; it consisted of men from all parts of Europe, and there was much in their transactions, which, to German eyes, appeared wild and irregular. And yet, the habit of fulfilling their engagements had so great an influence on even the most desponding, that Anthony's perseverance gained the victory more than once.

The largest demand made by the Firm was on a Herr Wenzel, a little dry man, who had been doing a good deal of business quietly in all countries. It was said that he had become rich by smuggling, and now he was in great danger of breaking. He had received even the Principal with great insolence, and behaved himself towards Anthony, for a long time, like a desperate man. One day, when Anthony had been reasoning with the surly old fellow for a whole hour, and, in spite of the many shifts he had tried, had remained firm, Wenzel at last burst out with these words: "It is enough; I am a ruined man, but you deserve to get your money. Your house has always behaved generously to me; you shall have security; send me your agent to-day, and call for me to-morrow morning."

When Anthony, the following morning, accompanied by the agent,

entered the house of the debtor, Wenzel, after a gloomy salutation, seized a large rusty key, put slowly on a faded cloak, on which there were numberless capes lying one over the other, like the shingles on a roof, and took the creditors to a ruined monastery in a remote corner of the town. They passed through a long cloister, and Anthony looked with astonishment at the skilful structure of the vaulting; time had burst open many of the arches, and crumbled parts of the vaulted roofs; the ruins were lying on the paved floor. The tombstones of the ancient inhabitants were built up against the walls; weather-beaten inscriptions informed the careless generation of the living, that pious monks had once sought peace within these walls. In these cloisters they had daily walked to and fro with their breviaries in their hands; here they had prayed, and dreamed away their time, till at last their poor souls had reposed on the intercession of their saints. Wenzel opened a secret door in the interior of the building, and led his companions down a winding stone staircase into a vault of vast dimensions. The rich wine of the monastery had once been kept there; and how often had the brother cellarer descended these very steps, had walked between the rows of casks, had drawn out a sample here and there, and when the bell sounded above him, had quickly bent his head, said a short prayer, and then resumed his tasting, or paced up and down, in an agreeable frame of mind. The bell which had called to prayer had long since been melted. There were gaps and crevices in the empty cells of the friars, and corn was now kept where formerly the prior, at the head of the brothers, sat at their goodly repast. All had vanished; only the cellar was preserved; and the coops of fiery Hungarian wine were now lying on their small tressels as they did centuries ago. Still the ribs of the fine vaulting united into large stars, still the place had its covering of pure whitewash, and the floor was covered with light-coloured sand. It was still customary for the cellarer to be allowed to approach the fine wine only with a wax taper. They were not the same casks out of which the old monks used to draw their wine, but it was from the same vines, from the vineyards on the hills of Hegyalla, the rose-coloured wine of Menes, the pride of Oedenburgh, and the milder drink of the careful vintage of Rust.

"A hundred and fifty coops, at eighteen, twenty-four, and thirty ducats the coop," said the agent, beginning the inventory of the stock. Wenzel went, with drooping head, from one cask to another; he stopped before each, and with a clean piece of linen carefully wiped away the slightest trace of mildew which might be discovered on some of the casks. "The walk hither used to be my favourite one," he said to Anthony. "For twenty years I have gone down to every vintage, and made purchases. Those were joyous days, Herr Wohlfart; they are now at an end for ever! Often have I walked here to and fro, and looked at the sun's rays falling from above on the casks, and have thought of those that walked here formerly. To-day I am for the last time in this cellar. What will now become of the wine? You will take it away, and it will be drunk in a foreign country, without its merits being understood; a brandy distiller will put his spirit in this cellar, or some new brewer his Bavarian beer. The old times are at an end for me! Look here, this is the noblest vintage," he said, going up to a cask. "I might have left it out of our arrangement. But of what use would one cask be to me? To drink? I no longer drink wine;

it may go with the rest; I will only take leave of it." He filled his glass. "Have you ever tasted anything like it?" he asked, offering the glass sadly to Anthony. Anthony acknowledged he had not.

Slowly they ascended the steps; the merchant stopped once more on the landing-place, and gazed down into the cellar for a long time. He then turned round resolutely, banged to the door of the cellar, took the key out, and placed it solemnly in Anthony's hand. "There is the key of your property. Our account is settled. Farewell, gentlemen." Slowly, and with his head bowed down, he walked along the ruined cloister; in the dawn of a dreary day, he resembled one of the old cellarers of the monastery still gliding as a ghost through the ruins of past magnificence. The agent called after him, "But you come to breakfast, Herr Wenzel?" The old man shook his head, and waved his hand declining.

Talk of breakfast, indeed! Everything in this place gave way to wine. Those long sittings in the taverns, which even in those sad times had not been given up, were no small annoyance to Anthony. He observed that in that country people worked much less and talked and drank much more than in his own. Whenever he had succeeded in settling anything, he could not escape the breakfast. Then the purchasers, sellers, and brokers, and whoever else were their friends, sat together at a round table in a wine-shop. They began with port, ate caviare by pounds, and ended the carouse with claret. From all quarters people were hospitably invited in. Everyone whose face was recognized was summoned to assist at the drinking-bout; larger and larger grew the company, and often evening surprised them. Meanwhile the wives of these men, accustomed to such proceedings, had the dinner frequently taken off two or three times, and then, with perfect indifference, put off till the next day. Often did Anthony think of Fink on these occasions, who, against his will, had taught him how to pass through these ordeals.

One afternoon that Anthony was playing at dominoes, an old lieutenant, looking up from his paper, called out to the officers who were also playing, "Yesterday evening one of our men had two fingers of his right hand shattered. The ass who was quartered with him was playing with his carbine, which had not been unloaded. The doctor considered an amputation indispensable. It is a great pity, for he is a fine fellow; he was one of the cleverest in the squadron. These misfortunes always happen to the best."

"What is his name?" inquired Herr von Bolling, placing his domino.

"It is the volunteer Sturm."

Anthony sprang up, so that the dominoes danced upon the table. "Where is the wounded man?"

The lieutenant described the situation of the field hospital.

In a dark room, full of beds and sick soldiers, lay the pale Karl. He stretched out his left hand to Anthony, and said, "It is over now; it gave me infernal pain, but I shall be able to use the hand again. My pen I can already hold, and I shall try everything else too, and if the right will not do the left will; only I shall not be able any more to make a display in gold rings."

"My poor, poor Karl!" exclaimed Anthony, "it is all over with your service in the army now."

"Do you know," said Karl, "I can bear that misfortune; there will be no regular war. When the seed-time comes in the spring I shall be all right again. I could get up now, if the doctor was not so strict. It is not nice here," he added, as if making an apology. "Many of our men are ill, and we must do as well as we can in a foreign land."

"You shall not stay in this room," said Anthony, "if I can help it; there is such a smell of illness, it is enough to make a healthy person quite faint. I shall beg leave of your commander to let me move you to my lodgings."

"Dear Herr Anthony!" exclaimed Karl, delighted.

"Be quiet," said Anthony; "I do not yet know if I shall get permission."

"I have still one request to make you," added the patient—"that you will inform my Goliath of the fact, so that he may not be too much frightened. If he hears it by accident from strangers, he will behave like an ogre."

Anthony promised, and hastened to the surgeon of the squadron, and to his patron the captain. "I will do my best to obtain leave for him," said the latter; "as the nature of his wound makes his dismissal certain, he may stay with you till he is discharged."

Three days later, Karl entered Anthony's room with his hand bound up. "Here I am," he said. "Adieu, pelisse! adieu, my brown horse, Selim! For a week you must have patience with me, Herr Anthony; then I shall again be able to lift chairs and tables with my maimed limb."

"Here is an answer from your father: it is directed to me."

"To you?" asked Karl, surprised. "Why to you? Why did he not write to me?"

"Listen yourself." Anthony took a large sheet, written from top to bottom in characters half an inch in size, and read:—

"HONOURED HERE WOHLFART,—This is a great misfortune for my poor son. Two fingers from ten, and there remain only eight. Even though they are little fingers, they give the same pain. It is a great misfortune for us both that we can write no more to each other. Therefore I beg you kindly to tell him what follows. He must not pine too much. He may, perhaps, be able to do some drilling still, and much with the hammer, too; and if Heaven should ordain that this should not be possible, still he must not pine too much. He is provided for in the iron chest. When I am dead, the key will be found in my waistcoat pocket. Now I greet him with my whole heart. As soon as he can move again, he must come to me. It is the more necessary, as I can no longer tell him by writing that I am for ever his faithful father,

JOHN STURM."

Anthony handed the letter to the invalid.

"It is all correct," said Karl, between laughing and crying. "In the first shock he fancies that he cannot write to me any more because my hand is wounded. He will stare when he gets my next letter."

Karl continued to dwell for some weeks in the room next to Anthony. As soon as he could move his hand again, he took charge of his friend's wardrobe, and began to perform some of the small

services which he had taken on himself, years before, in the Principal's house. Anthony tried to prevent his taking the needless part of a servant. "Are you again brushing my coat?" he said, on entering Karl's room; "you know that I will not allow it."

"It was only as company for my own," said Karl, by way of an excuse; "two always do together better than one. Your coffee is ready; the machine is not good, it always tastes of the spirit."

As he could not make himself useful to Anthony, he began to work for himself: with his old predilection for tools, he had soon gathered around him a number of implements, and whenever Anthony left the house he began sawing, drilling, planing, and rasping, so that even the deaf captain of artillery, who was quartered in the next house, came to the conviction that a carpenter had moved there, and sent his broken-down bedstead to be mended. As Karl was still obliged to spare his right hand, he used all the tools by turns with the left, and rejoiced like a child over the progress that he made. When the doctor advised him to abstain for some weeks from this employment, he began to write with the left hand, and daily showed Anthony specimens of his handwriting. "It is only for the sake of exercise," he said; "a man must know what he can do; but, indeed, it is only a matter of habit to write at all with the hand; those who have none do it with their feet. I daresay even they are not necessary; it might be done with the head."

"You are a fool," said Anthony, laughing.

"I assure you," continued Karl, "that a long reed put in the mouth, with two wires fastened behind the ears in order to prevent the shaking, would do it tolerably well. The bone-setting of your key-hole is loose, I will glue it at once."

"I wonder it does not stick of itself," said Anthony, joking, "for a prodigious smell of glue is coming from your room; the whole air is changed into glue."

"God forbid," said Karl; "it is scentless glue that I have—a new discovery."

When the faithful fellow went home with his dismissal in his pocket, Anthony felt as lonely as if he had now, for the first time, left the magic circle of the great balance.

One day Anthony passed by the inn where the Principal had been wounded; he stopped for a moment, and looked with curiosity at the old house and court-yard, in which now the soldiers, with white coats, were occupied in cleaning and polishing their accoutrements. Suddenly he perceived a creature in a black caftan, who glided from the taproom across the gateway; there were the black curls, the little cap, the figure and gait of his old acquaintance, Schmiei Tinkeles; but, alas! it was no longer the same face. The former Tinkeles was a fine fellow in his way; his two locks used always to be so smooth, and worn as coquettishly as was consistent for a man of business; he had fine red lips, and a hue of pink on his yellow cheeks. The present Schmiei was only a shadow of the former. He looked pale as a ghost; his nose had become long and pointed, and his head drooped on his chest, like the calyx of a fading flower by the brook Kedron.

Anthony called out astonished "Is that you?" and went up to him. Tinkeles shrunk as if struck by lightning—an image of terror

and fright. "Good gracious!" were the only words that passed his bloodless lips.

"What is the matter with you, Tinkeles? you look so wretched. What are you doing in this town? and how the deuce do you just happen to come to this house?"

"I can assure you that it is not my fault that I am here," answered Tinkeles, still half out of his wits; "it is not my fault that the Principal was so ill-treated in this house. His blood flowed for the goods that Mausche Fischel had sent, and for which he had already drawn the money. I am innocent, Herr Wolkfart, as I would save my soul; I did not know that the landlord was so bad a man as to raise his hand against a gentleman who stood before him without a hat or cap. Without a cap!" he repeated louder, "bareheaded! Believe me, I felt as if a sword went through my body when I saw the landlord behave so violently towards a man who stood before him with head erect, like a man of honour, as he has been all his life."

"Listen to me," said Anthony, looking astonished at the Galician, who continued to talk, whilst endeavouring to recover his self-possession; "listen to me, I say. You were in this inn when the waggons were plundered; you were looking on from a hiding-place during our quarrel with the landlord: you know the man, and are living here still. I will tell you plainly what you have only half confessed; you knew of the unloading of the goods, and, moreover, you had an interest in retaining the waggons here, and were in league with the landlord. After what you have told me I shall not let you go till I know all; either you come along with me to my room and confess to me of your own free will what you know, or I will take you before the soldiers and have you tried by them."

Tinkeles stood aghast. "God of my fathers, it is dreadful, it is dreadful!" he whimpered out, and his teeth chattered.

Anthony felt compassion for the man's terror, and said, "Come with me, Tinkeles; I promise if you confess honestly you shall not be hurt."

"What shall I confess to you," groaned Schmiei, "when I have nothing to confess?"

"If you don't come voluntarily I will call the soldiers," said Anthony, severely.

"Don't talk of soldiers," said Tinkeles, shuddering; "I will come with you, and will tell you what I know if you will promise not to betray me to any one, neither to your Principal, to Mausche Fischel, to the scoundrel of a landlord, nor to the soldiers."

"Come along," said Anthony, pointing with his hand down the street. He took the pitiful wretch with him like a prisoner, and watched him closely for fear Schmiei should follow the dictates of his bad conscience and escape into a bye-street.

The Galician had not spirit enough for that; he sneaked by Anthony's side with drooping head, looking at him sometimes with a sigh, and grumbling out unintelligible words. When in Anthony's room he began of his own accord:—"It has been a weight on my heart. I could not sleep, I could not eat nor drink, and when I was running to do my business it weighed on my soul like a stone in a glass of water; when you wish to drink, the stone strikes your

teeth, and you spill the water over you. Woe is me! how I have spilt it on myself!"

"Speak out, then," said Anthony, again softened by the sincerity of the lamentation.

"I came here on account of the waggons," said Tinkles, hurriedly, looking frightened at Anthony. "Mausche has dealt with you for ten years, and always honestly, and you have gained a fine lot of money by him, and so he thought the time was come when he might begin a good business for himself and close his account with you. When the row began he came to me and said, 'Schmiei,' says he, 'you are not afraid,' says he; 'you don't mind the firing; go amongst them, and see if you can stop the waggons for me; perhaps you may sell them on the road; perhaps you may bring them back to me; it is better that we get them than any one else.' So I came here and waited till the waggons arrived, and spoke to the landlord, explaining to him that as the goods could never come into your hands it would be best that they should come into ours; but I neither wished nor expected that he would be such a bloodhound. And from the time that I saw him cut your master's coat, I had no rest. I always had before my eyes the bloody shirt and the fine green cloth coat which he cut open."

Anthony listened to the confession of Tinkles with a curiosity that surpassed the indignation he felt at the—not very uncommon—manœuvre of the Galician dealers. He contented himself with saying to the sinner, "It is to your rascality that Herr Schroeter owes his wounded arm, and if we had not hindered you, you would have robbed us of twenty thousand thalers."

"It is not twenty thousand," cried out Schmiei, writhing. "Wool is low and tallow does not sell. It is less than twenty thousand."

"Well," said Anthony, contemptuously, "what am I to do with you now?"

"Do nothing with me," entreated Schmiei, laying his hand imploringly on Anthony's coat; "let the whole affair drop. You have the goods, be content with them. It was a fine business you prevented Mausche Fischel from doing."

"And you are sorry for it," said Anthony, angrily.

"I am glad that you have the goods, as you have shed blood for them, therefore do nothing to me, and I will take care to be at your disposal in everything. If you can employ me in this place it will ease my mind to be able to help you."

Anthony answered coldly, "Though I have promised not to impeach you before the law courts for your rascality, yet it is impossible for us to have anything more to say to you. You are a wicked fellow, Tinkles. You have proved yourself dishonest to our house, and from henceforward we have done with you?"

"Why do you say that I am wicked? You have for years known me as an honest man; how can you say that I am wicked for having once tried to do a little business, and had the misfortune not to do it? Is that wicked?"

"Enough," said Anthony, "you may go."

Tinkles remained standing, and asked, "Can you make use of the new imperial ducats? I can get them for you at five and a quarter."

"I want nothing from you. Go."

"The Jew went slowly towards the door, then turned round again. "There is a fine bargain to be made in oats. If you will take upon you the delivery, I will get you a share. You may gain a lot of money by it."

"I will have no transactions with you, Tinkeles. For God's sake begone."

The Jew glided out, but still once more fumbled at the door; conscience, however, prevented him from entering the room again, and after some minutes Anthony saw him dejectedly crossing the street.

From that time Anthony was besieged by the penitent Tinkeles; not a day passed that the Galician did not push himself into Anthony's way, begging, after his fashion, for pardon. Now he fell upon him in the street, then he disturbed him when he was writing, by timidly knocking at his door. He had always something to offer, some news to impart, by which he hoped to obtain favour. His ingenuity was quite touching. He offered to purchase or sell every imaginable thing for Anthony; to do all sorts of errands for him; to spy or to report when he discovered that Anthony had intercourse with the officers, and especially with the young lieutenant with delicate features and a small beard, who sometimes went with Anthony out of the restaurants and frequented his lodgings. Tinkeles began to offer him such objects as he thought would be agreeable to an officer: Anthony, however, kept firm to his resolution of avoiding any dealings with him, but at last he could no longer find it in his heart to treat the poor devil so roughly; and Tinkeles thought, from some suppressed smiles, and short questions put to him by Anthony, that his intercession with the Principal was not impossible, and he wooed it with the perseverance of his ancestor Jacob.

One morning young Rothsattel rattled into Anthony's room. "I am reported ill, have a bad cold, and must keep in my wretched rooms," he said, seating himself on the couch; "you can help me to spend the evening: we are to have a rubber of whist. I have invited our doctor and some comrades. Will you come?" Anthony, delighted and rather flattered, accepted. "Well," continued the young gentleman, "then you must make it possible for me to lose my money to you; that miserable vingt-un has cleaned me out. Lend me twenty ducats for a week?"

"With pleasure," said Anthony, and got out his purse.

While the lieutenant carelessly pocketed the money, the sound of a horse's feet was heard in the street; he hastened to the window. "By Jove, that is a fine animal!—Polish blood. The horse-dealer has stolen it from one of the rebels, and wishes now to cheat some honest soldier."

"How do you know that the horse is to be sold?" asked Anthony, who meanwhile was sealing a letter at his desk.

"Do you not see that there is a sharper parading him about?"

At that moment a gentle knock was heard at the door, and Herr Tinkeles pushed in his curly head, and then the black caftan, and muttered humbly, "I wish to ask the worthy gentlemen whether they would look at a horse which is worth as many louis-d'ors as they ask thalers. Pray, Herr Wohlfart, just step to the window? You need only look. Looking is not buying."



"Is this figure one of your commercial friends?" asked the lieutenant, laughing.

"He is so no more, Herr von Rothsattel," answered Anthony, in the same tone; "he is in disgrace. This time his visit is for you. Take care, or he will induce you to buy the horse."

The dealer listened attentively to the conversation, and fixed his eyes with curiosity on the lieutenant. "If the gracious baron will buy the horse," he said, accosting Rothsattel imprudently, and staring at him fixedly, "he would be a fine riding-horse, or would do for the farm."

"What the deuce do you know of my estate?" asked the officer. "I have no estate."

"Do you know the gentleman?" inquired Anthony.

"Why should I not know him, if he is the gentleman who possesses the large estate in your country, and has now built a manufactory, and makes sugar?"

"He means your father," said Anthony. "Tinkeles has his connection in our province, and stays there sometimes for months."

"What do I hear!" said the Galician, musing. "It is his father! I beg your pardon, Herr Wohlfart. So you are acquainted with this gentleman's father!" A smile played about the moustaches of the lieutenant.

"I have seen him, at least," answered Anthony, vexed by the impertinent question of the dealer, and feeling that he was blushing.

"Pardon me if I ask you whether you are a friend of this gentleman's?"

"What does that signify to you, Tinkeles?" asked Anthony, sharply, and blushed still more, as he did not well know how to answer that question.

"Yes, he is my friend, Jew!" said the lieutenant, slapping Anthony on the shoulder. "He is my cashier, and has to-day lent me twenty ducats, but he will not give me the money to buy your horse. So go to the devil."

The dealer listened to every word with his neck stretched out, and looked at the two young men with a curiosity, and, as Anthony thought, with an interest which was very different from his usual lurking way. "So he has lent you twenty ducats," he repeated, mechanically; "he will lend you more still if you ask for more. I know it," he muttered, "I know it."

"What do you know?" asked Anthony.

"I know, to be sure, how it is between young gentlemen who are friends," said the dealer, with an expressive motion of his head. "You do not want my horse then, Herr Wohlfart?" Saying which he turned round sharply, and disappeared. Immediately after they heard the horse trotting off.

"Is that fellow crazy?" the lieutenant exclaimed, looking at the Jew, as he hurried away.

"Generally he is not so ready to withdraw," answered Anthony, surprised at the mysterious conduct of the man. "Probably your uniform has hastened his retreat."

"I hope you are pleased. To-night, then," said the lieutenant, saluting, and he left the room.

In the afternoon a gentle knock was again heard at Anthony's

door, and Tinkles made his appearance once more. He looked cautiously round the room, and without minding Anthony's gloomy brow, came close up to him.

"Allow me to ask," he said, nodding his head familiarly, "whether it is true that you lent him twenty ducats, and that you will give him yet more, if he asks for it?"

Anthony looked at the dealer wondering, and rising up, said, "I have given him the money, and would give him more. But now, speak out, what is working in your head? for I see you have something to tell me."

Tinkles put on a knowing look, and winked significantly. "Though he be your friend, mind you don't lend him any more money. Mark my words, don't lend him one gulden more," he repeated emphatically.

"And why not?" asked Anthony. "Your advice is of no use, unless I know for what reason you warn me."

"And if I tell you what I know, will you speak in my favour to Herr Schroeter, and beg him not to think any more about the waggons, when he sees me in your office?"

"I will tell him that you have since served me honestly in another way."

"You will speak for me, that is enough; and you shall hear what will keep you from lending your good money. The affairs of the Rothsattel, the father of this young gent, are very rotten; misfortune hold its black hand over him. He is a lost man; there is no help for him."

"Whence have you this intelligence?" exclaimed Anthony, horrified. "It is impossible," he added, more quietly. "It is a falsehood; tittle-tattle of hole-and-corner agents, and other such fellows."

"Believe my word," said the Jew, with an impressive earnestness, which made his figure seem taller and his voice less discordant. "His father is in the hands of one who walks about secretly, like an angel of destruction. He goes and throws his noose round the neck of those he has marked, without being seen. He draws the noose, and they fall like wooden ninepins. Why should you lose your money to such people, who already have the noose round their neck?"

"Who is the devil you mean, who has his hands on the baron?" cried out Anthony, in a state of excitement that made him forget all caution.

"What is the use of knowing the name?" answered the Galician, coldly. "If I knew the name, I would not tell it, and if I were to tell it, it would be of no use to you, or Rothsattel either, for you don't know the man, and perhaps the baron doesn't either."

"Is this man Herr Ehrenthal?"

"I cannot tell the name," repeated Tinkles, with a shrug of his shoulders, "but it is not Hirsch Ehrenthal."

"If I am to believe your words, and if you are to do me a service," continued Anthony, more calmly, "you must tell me some details. I must know the name of this man, and all you have heard concerning him and the baron."

"I have heard nothing," answered Tinkles, doggedly, "if you intend to question me as the law courts do. Words spoken evaporate in the air like a scent; one catches this, and another that. I cannot

repeat the words which I have heard, nor will I tell you even for money. I will not lay my hand on my prayer-book, and bear witness before a court. What I say is for your ears, and no others. But I tell you that two persons have been sitting together, not one evening, but many—and not during one year, but many; and they have whispered together in our inn, behind the balustrade, under which the river flows. And the water murmured below, and they murmured above, over the water. I was lying on my straw bed in the room, and they thought that I slept. And I have often heard the name of Rothsattel and the name of his estate from their lips; and I know that misfortune hangs over him, but I know nothing further. And, now I have told you, I am going. The advice I have given you will be payment for the day when you fought with your pistol for the wool and the hides; and you'll remember the promise you have given me."

Anthony cast his eyes down anxiously. Through Bernhard, he knew that the baron was in frequent relations with Ehrenthal, and this intercourse of the landed proprietor with a speculator of notoriously bad character had often struck him as strange. But what Tinkles told him sounded too incredible; he himself had never heard anything unfavourable about the baron's situation. "I cannot be satisfied," he said, after a pause, "with what you have told me. You must reflect, and perhaps you will remember the name, and some stray words which you may have caught."

"Perhaps I might remember," answered the Galician, with a peculiar intonation, that did not escape the troubled Anthony. "And so we have closed our account. I brought on you sorrow and danger, and have in exchange done you a kindness—a great kindness," he added, in a self-satisfied tone, looking into Anthony's puzzled face. "Can you take gold for notes?" he asked, suddenly resuming his business manner. "I can let you have louis-d'ors, if you will give me ducats or bank-notes in exchange."

"You know I enter into no money transactions," answered Anthony, absently.

"Perhaps you could give bills on good firms at Vienna?"

"I do not deal in them," said Anthony, angrily.

"Well," said the Jew, "a question does not bite anyone," and he turned to go. He stopped a moment at the door. "I was obliged to give two silver guldens to Seligman, who brought the horse for you gentlemen to look at, and waited for you half the day. It was ready money that I advanced for you; won't you return me my two guldens?"

"Thank God!" exclaimed Anthony, smiling involuntarily, "you are now the old Tinkles again. No, Schmiei, you will not get the two guldens."

"And you won't take my louis-d'or for your Vienna notes?"

"Nor that," answered Anthony.

"Adieu!" said Tinkles. "When we meet again, I hope we shall be good friends." He laid hold of the latch. "And if you wish to know the name of this man who can humble the baron, till he becomes as insignificant as the grass upon the high road, which is trod upon by everybody, ask for the bookkeeper of Hirsch Ehrenthal, Itzig by name; Veitel Itzig is his name." With these words, he hurried out of the door. Anthony rushed out and called after him, but he paid

no attention, and slipped away before Anthony could overtake him. As there was good reason for hoping to see him again shortly, Anthony returned to his room, much occupied with the confessions of this extraordinary being.

He thought it would be right to impart what he had heard immediately to the baron's son, though it would be a difficult task on account of the sensitiveness of his military friend. "Yet," he said to himself, "it must be done this very evening. I will tell him; I will go early to him, or remain after the others are gone."

Fate did not allow this resolution to be fulfilled. Early as Anthony hastened to young Rothsattel's quarters, he found the room already occupied by three or four lieutenants of hussars. Eugene was lying in a dressing-gown on a sofa; the squadron were encamped around him.

The doctor entered soon after Anthony. "How are you?" he asked, walking up to the invalid.

"Pretty well," answered Eugene; "I don't want any more of your poison."

"A little fever," the doctor continued, "heaviness in the head, and so on. It is too hot here; I must open the window."

"The devil! you shan't, doctor," exclaimed a young man, who had placed two chairs together so as to make himself a kind of couch. "You know that, when not on service, I cannot bear a draught."

"Leave it," cried out Eugene; "we are homœopathists, and expel heat by heat. What shall we drink?"

"Some sort of punch will be best for the patient," said the doctor.

"Fetch the pine-apple, dear Anthony," requested Eugene; "it is in the next room, with all the rest of the requisites."

"Faith!" ejaculated the doctor, as Anthony brought the fruit in, followed by a servant with a basket of bottles; "a sweet colossus! a splendid specimen! With your permission, I will make the punch; the mixture must be regulated according to the state of the patient." He pulled a black case out of his pocket, and selected a knife to slice the fruit.

"Zounds! the devil take you! hang your black case!" roared out the hussars all together, and jumping up. The curses that flew about were aimed at the doctor's head, like the irregular fire of artillery.

"Gentlemen," exclaimed the doctor, "a little frightened at the storm of indignation, 'have any of you a knife? Just look. I know none of you have—looking-glasses and brushes—what else could one expect in your pockets? And does any of you know how to make a bowl fit for a man to drink? Empty one you might, but you cannot make one.'"

"I will try, doctor," said Bolling from a corner.

"Ah, Herr von Bolling! you, too, here?" answered the doctor, with a bow.

Bolling took the pine-apple out of his hand, and held it carefully out of the reach of the medical arm. "Come here, Anthony, and prevent this monster of a doctor from touching the materials with his carving-knife."

Whilst Anthony was busily at work with the elderly lieutenant, the doctor drew out of his pocket two packs of cards, and placed them with solemnity on the table.

"Away with your cards!" cried out Eugene; "to-day, at least, we will remain together without getting into mischief."

"You cannot," said the doctor, jeeringly; "you yourself will be the first to begin. I intend nothing but a quiet rubber, with a fixed bet on each side—a game for pious hermits! But what you will do with those cards time will show; there they lie, by the candlestick."

"Don't listen to the tempter," called out one of the lieutenants, laughing.

"Whoever touches the cards first shall be fined a luncheon," said another.

"Here is the liquor," cried Bolling, placing the bowl on the table. He filled the glasses. "Taste that, you bloodthirsty man," he said to the doctor.

"Rough!" he declared; "to-morrow morning it will be drinkable."

While the gentlemen disputed about the drink, Eugene took one pack of cards, cut it mechanically, and placed the packs side by side. The doctor roared out, "Hold! you are caught! He himself pays the fine." They all laughed, and pressed round the table.

"Keep the bank, doctor," called out the officers, throwing the cards to him. Other packs quickly appeared out of the pockets of the gentlemen; the doctor laid a heap of notes and silver on the table, and the gambling began. They did not play for very high stakes, and jokes accompanied the losses and gains of the players. Anthony also held some cards, and staked at random. He had great difficulty, to-night, in joining in the conversation, and looked with great sympathy on the young Rothsattel, who bent over the cards without any presentiment of what was awaiting him. Anthony won some thalers, but saw with regret that Eugene had constant ill-luck. One ducat after another flew into the hands of the holder of the bank. As Anthony had supplied the money, he made no remarks on the losses of his host; but the doctor himself said to his patient, after he had put in some more ducats, "If you feel hot, you have fever, and it would be wiser of you not to play any longer. I never had a feverish patient who did not lose at faro."

"That is not your business, doctor," answered Eugene, sharply, and staked again.

"You have bad luck, Eugene," said the good-natured Bolling; "you go on too fast."

When they came to the end of the deal, the doctor quietly pocketed the cards. "The bank has won a great deal," he said, "and I must put a stop to it. Everything must have an end."

Again a storm rose amongst the officers. "I'll take the bank," cried out Eugene. "Give me your cash, Wohlfart."

The doctor protested. At last he consoled himself with the idea that Eugene might have more luck as keeper of the bank. "It is fair to let a man have a chance of repairing his losses," thought he.

Anthony took some bank-notes from his pocket, but he himself ceased playing. He sat there sorrowfully looking on his friend, who, with a face burning with wine and fever, was eagerly watching the cards. Deal succeeded deal rapidly, and again Eugene lost all he had before him. The bank-notes vanished—hardly a card turned in his favour. The officers looked wondering at one another. "I also

propose to leave off," cried out Bolling. "You shall have your revenge another time."

"I will have it to-night!" exclaimed Eugene, springing up and locking the door. "None shall leave! Stake regularly, and risk something. There is money," and he threw a packet of matches on the table. "Each match stands for a Champagne thaler. I pay to-morrow. I allow the match to be broken once, but no stake below a thaler." Again the cards flew along the table, and the game went on. Anthony, in the meanwhile, took possession of the punch-ladle, and determined that no more should be poured into the glasses. Eugene continued to lose, and, as if by magic, the matches disappeared on all sides. Eugene fetched fresh packets, and cried out, wildly, "At parting we will make up the account;" on which Bolling rose, and dashed his chair on the floor.

"He is a scoundrel who leaves the room!" shouted Eugene.

"You are mad!" said the other, vexed. "It is wrong to fleecce one's comrade as we are doing you. I have never seen anything like this. If the devil has a finger in the pie, I will not help him." He drew away from the table, and Anthony placed himself by him. Both watched silently the reckless way in which the money was flowing from one hand to the other.

"I also have enough," said the doctor, showing a large bundle of matches in his hand. "This has been a strange evening—since I have played at cards I have never known anything equal to this!"

Eugene rushed again to the side table where the matches were lying, but Bolling seized the rest of the packet, opened the window, and flung them down into the street. "It is better that those infernal pegs should burn people's boots down there than a hole in your purse." He then threw the cards on the floor. "The play must cease! You have bullied us like one from the guard-room of old Dessau; now I shall do the same by you!"

"I won't take such orders!" shouted out Eugene, angrily.

Bolling buckled on his sword, and put his hand on the hilt. "You will give in to-night," he said, gravely; "to-morrow you may call me to account before the whole body of officers. Make up your accounts, gentlemen!—we break up now."

The counters were thrown on the table; the doctor summed them up.

Eugene pulled his memorandum-book from his pocket, sullenly, and put down his debts to each of them, dissatisfied; and with short greetings the company departed.

"It is about eight hundred thalers," said the doctor, on the way home. Bolling shrugged his shoulders. "I hope he can procure the money; but I wish you had kept the cards in your pocket. If anything is said about the matter, Rothsattel will have no reason to be pleased. We had better all of us keep silent; and I trust that you also, Herr Wohlfart, will do so."

Anthony went home in a violent state of excitement. He had been sitting on thorns the whole evening, and reproaching the prodigal bitterly in his own mind. He blamed himself for having lent him the money, and yet he felt how impossible it would have been to refuse him.

When, on the following morning, he was about to call on Rothsattel, the door opened, and Eugene himself entered, out of humour,

dejected, and confused. "What cursed ill-luck I had last night!" he exclaimed; "I am in a fix. I must to-day procure eight hundred thalers, and I have no one in this unlucky hole to apply to but you. Be reasonable, Anthony, and get me the money."

"It is not easy for me either," said he, gravely; "it is no trifling sum; and the money of which I can dispose here is not my own."

"But you can arrange it," continued Eugene, persuasively. "If you do not help me out of this embarrassment I shall be ruined—the commander is not a man to be trifled with. I risk everything if the business is not soon settled!" In his distress, he took hold of Anthony's hand, and pressed it eagerly.

Anthony looked into the perturbed countenance of him who was Leonora's brother, and answered, though not without a struggle, "I have a small sum of my own in the business, and as I have to remit money from here to our firm, it will, perhaps, be possible to retain the sum you require, and make over my money to the cashier."

"You are my preserver!" exclaimed Eugene, much relieved. "In a month, at furthest, I will return you the eight hundred thalers."

Anthony went to his desk, and handed the money to the lieutenant. It was a considerable portion of the remnant of his paternal inheritance.

When Eugene had pocketed the notes with the warmest thanks, Anthony began: "And now, Herr von Rothsattel, I have to inform you of something that weighed heavily on my heart the whole of yesterday evening. I hope you will not consider me intrusive if I do not conceal from you what you ought to know, but what a stranger has hardly a right to tell you."

"If you mean to preach morality to me, the moment is badly chosen," answered the lieutenant, gloomily. "I know perfectly that I have committed a folly, and expect a lecture from my father. I do not wish to hear from any one else what I must take from him."

"You give me credit for very little delicacy, Herr von Rothsattel," said Anthony, much hurt at the anger of the officer. "I heard yesterday, from a source not very pure, certainly, that your father has been brought, or is at least likely to be brought, into embarrassments by the intrigues of unprincipled speculators, and that his fortune is in danger; and the person who is intriguing against him has been named to me."

The lieutenant gazed in astonishment at Anthony's serious face; at length he said, "The deuce! you frighten me; but, no, it is not possible; my father has never told me of his affairs being out of order."

"Perhaps he himself is not aware of the plots and baseness of the men who intend to make use of his credit for their own purposes."

"Baron von Rothsattel is not a person to be made use of by any one," answered the lieutenant, haughtily.

"I presume not," Anthony readily assented. "Nevertheless, I beg you to remember that the baron's last great undertakings have brought him into frequent connection with cunning money-dealers, whose principles are not very strict; the person who gave me this information did it evidently with a good intention. He expressed an opinion which, I fear, is shared by a number of inferior agents—that your father is in serious danger of losing large sums. I therefore invite you to come with me to the man; perhaps we may succeed in

getting more out of him—he is the same person you saw yesterday in my room.”

The lieutenant looked much cast down; he took up his military cap without saying a word, and the two hastened to the inn where Tinkeles lodged.

“It will be best for you to ask for him yourself,” said Anthony, on the road. The officer entered the house and made inquiries of every one, but Schmiei had left the day before at noon. They hurried from the inn to the town major, and, after many questions, were informed that Tinkeles’ passport had been *viséd* for the Turkish frontier. Thus the informer had suddenly vanished, and by his departure added weight, in the eyes of both, to his warnings. The more they talked about his disclosures, the more excited the lieutenant became, and the less he knew what to do. At last he burst forth in great agitation, “Perhaps my father is now in difficulties. How am I to confess my debt to him? It is a cursed accident. Wohlfart, you are a perfect gentleman, for you have lent me money, although the news of this invisible Jew was already racking your brains; you must now be still more kind to me, and lend me the money for a longer time.”

“You shall have it till you yourself wish to repay it.”

“That is most generous,” exclaimed the lieutenant. “One more thing I must ask: write yourself to my father—you know best what the crazy fellow has told you, and it would be disagreeable for me to inform my father of such things.”

“But your father will, with good reason, consider a stranger’s meddling with his affairs as great insolence,” replied Anthony, embarrassed at the idea of entering into correspondence with Leonora’s father.

“But my father knows you,” said Eugene, earnestly; “I remember that my sister told me of you. Only write and say that I begged you to do so; it really would be better for you to undertake the task.” Anthony assented, and sat down at once to inform the baron of the warnings of the dealer.

Thus, in a foreign country, he entered into a new connection with the baron’s family, which was to become ominous to him, as well as to the Rothsattels.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

HAPPY the foot that walks over wide domains of its own. Happy the head which knows how to subdue the thriving powers of nature under its own rational will. All that makes men strong, healthy, and good, falls to the lot of the agriculturist; his life is a continual struggle, an endless victory. The pure air of Heaven strengthens the muscles of his body, the primeval order of nature forces his thoughts into a regular course; he is the priest who has to preserve steadiness, discipline, and morals—the first virtues of a people. While other kinds of occupation become obsolete, his remains as eternal as the life of nature; while other pursuits imprison men in narrow walls, in the depths of the earth, or between the planks of a ship, his gaze is only limited by the blue sky above and the firm



ground below, to him the greatest pleasures of creation are granted, for whatever he demands from nature, plants, or animals, spring up under his hand to a gay existence. The townsman refreshes his heart with a sight of the green crops and the golden harvest; with the cattle in the fields, and the galloping foals; with the verdure of the woods, and the fragrant of the meadows; but greater, prouder, and more noble is the pleasure of the man, who walks across his own land with the consciousness that all this is his—his energy produces it, and turns it into a blessing. He does not survey the picture presented to him by nature with idle enjoyment; every look is accompanied by a wish, every impression by a plan, everything has a purpose in his eyes, for all, the fertile soil, animals, and men, must produce something fresh, according to his will—the will of the master. The daily work is his enjoyment, and from this enjoyment his energy increases.—Such is the life of the man who farms industriously his own estate.

Thrice happy the master of a soil where the rough works of nature have been contended with for many generations. The ploughshare cuts deep into the clean soil, plants of difficult cultivation spread their leaves in rich luxuriance; large umbels, and husks well filled with grain, ripen on the stalks, and pulpy roots thrive in the ground. Then comes the time when scientific industry settles itself upon the land; strange-looking machines enter the farm-yard; the huge boiler crowned with flowers is driven in, large wheels with a hundred teeth whirl round obediently, long tubes wind themselves in the new-built edifice, and the joints of the machine move restlessly day and night. A noble industry! It thrives out of the richness of the soil, and enriches it in return. Where the soil of a property furnishes plentifully fruits to the factory, the ancient plough works in the open field, and the modern steam-engine in the walled house, and in brotherly union make their master richer, grander and wiser. As long as he cultivated only the old-fashioned grains, green fodder for the animals, and potatoes, the prices at the nearest weekly market were, perhaps, the most interesting thing to him in the external world; and the boasting of his village neighbours his greatest vexation. With exclusive pride he looked from his narrow circle on the busy life of the large town, and the complicated state of things created by modern times as on the blue distance. Now he himself stands amidst the wheels of modern inventions; he is able to observe beyond his own boundary the many currents of the human mind. He learns many of the laws of life, and knows many of the thoughts of other men; and now that he himself requires the bustle of the market, and the labours of the scholar, he measures men by a different standard. He joins himself to people of other vocations, and strangers are glad to unite with him for their own advantage; larger and larger becomes the circle into which he is drawn by his manifold interests, and more and more powerful the influence that he gains over others.

By the side of the agricultural labourer, a new race of working men, of every degree of knowledge and cultivation, have built their huts; all these men the landed proprietor can satisfy and make happy. The value of his estate becomes greater from year to year, as the productive power of the soil increases; and the hope of greater gain

rouses even the peasant out of the old habits of which he is so tenacious. The bad cart-roads become good, the marshy ditches are turned into canals: files of waggons pass between the corn-fields, and the red roofs of new dwelling-houses rise in waste places; the postman, who formerly carried his leather bag only twice a-week across the fields, appears now every day—his post-bag heavy with letters and newspapers; and when he stops at a new house, to bring the young wife, who has come from afar with her husband, news from her old home, he gratefully receives the glass of milk which the delighted woman offers him, and relates to her hastily how long the journey from one village to another was to him in the burning sun formerly. Now, too, vanity, the childish cousin of all progress, is awakened. The needle of the tailor is busy sewing all kinds of new stuffs; the small tradesman sets up his shop amongst the cottages of the peasants—he places lemons, nice packets of tobacco, and alluring bottles with silver labels in his window. The village schoolmaster complains of the number of scholars—a second school is built, a higher class is established; in a cupboard in his room, the schoolmaster forms the first circulating library, and the bookseller of the town sends him new books for sale. Thus the life of an energetic landlord is a blessing to the whole neighbourhood; indeed, the whole country.

But woe to the agriculturist whose land is ruined by the introduction of foreign capital! He is a lost man if his returns do not cover the claims made upon him by other men. Nature only grants her blessings to him who looks her in the face as a free and steadfast man—she revolts when she suspects weakness, rashness, and a wavering mind. To such no labour succeeds. The yellow blossom of the rape and the blue flowers of the flax wither, and give no fruit; rust and blight overspread the corn, and deadly disease destroys the potato-bulb; all of them so long accustomed to obedience, know how to punish neglect severely. Then will his daily walk over the fields become a curse to the master; when the lark rises from the rye, it reminds him that the fruit is already sold on the stalk; when the team of oxen carries the clover to the stables, he knows that the produce of milk and meat is already claimed by foreign creditors, and he doubts whether the fertility diffused over his fields by the ruminating of his hungry cattle, will be any advantage to himself. Gloomy, morose, and desperate, he returns to his farm-yard. He soon becomes estranged from his farming and fields; he seeks far from home to escape troublesome thoughts, and by doing so accelerates his ruin. The entire devotion to his work, which might perhaps save him, becomes insupportable to him.

But threefold woe to the landlord, who, with ignorant covetousness, rashly introduces the black art of the steam-engine upon his soil, in order to call forth powers which do not exist in it. Upon him falls the heaviest curse allotted to mortal men. He not only becomes weaker himself, but deteriorates those who are bound by service to him. The whirling of the wheels he so inconsiderately placed within his territory, will destroy whatever remains sound upon his farm; the productive power of his soil is consumed by fruitless experiments, his teams are lamed by hard driving for his factory, and his honest ploughmen turned into dirty, hungry proleta-

rians. Where formerly the necessary work was done with quiet obedience, now quarrels, stubbornness, and dishonesty prevail. The landlord himself is dragged into the whirl of business, demands pour upon him like roaring floods; in the desperate struggle of a drowning man, he grasps for help at whatever comes within his reach, and at last, exhausted with fruitless efforts, he sinks into the abyss.

On the baron's estate the crops had often been better than those of his neighbours; his flocks were known throughout the country to be perfectly healthy: bad years, which had pressed heavily on others, had, comparatively speaking, done him little harm. Now, as if by a spell, everything was changed. An epidemic broke out amongst the cattle; the corn in the fields looked well, but when it was thrashed out the yield was small. Everywhere the calculations were greater than the produce. Formerly he would have borne this calmly, now it made him ill. Farming became hateful to him; he left it entirely to his bailiff. All his hopes were centred on his factory; and when he entered his fields, he only did it to look after his beetroot, to the cultivation of which he had latterly devoted the whole strength of his farm.

The new factory rose behind the trees of the park; the voices of busy men were heard confusedly about the building; the first crop of roots was brought in and stored; the following day the work was to begin. Still the brazier was hammering at the huge boiler, the mechanic was busy at the great press, and industrious women carried out the rubbish in baskets, and cleaned up the place, where in future they were to be employed. The baron was standing at the door; he listened impatiently to the beating of the hammers, which had been so long in accomplishing the work. From to-morrow a new era was to begin for him; he stood now at the door of his treasury. He might fling away all his old anxieties; in the following years he would pay off what he had borrowed, and afterwards he would save money. Whilst he was thus musing, his attention was turned to his worn-out horses and the sorrowful face of his old bailiff, and an indistinct fear crept, like an ugly insect, over the restless, fluttering leaves of his thoughts. He had staked all on this cast; he had so encumbered his estate with mortgages, that he might ask himself, at this moment, how much of it was still his own; all this he had done in the hope of raising his family shield, by crystallizing the juice from the fruit of his land. Have a care, baron! Though you may have the white crystals that clink like stones, they will not stand wind and weather; they will melt in the rain, they will dissolve in the air, and whatever you found on them will fall to ruin.

The baron himself had become another man in the last few years. Wrinkles on his forehead, lines of ill-temper about his mouth, and grey hair on his temples—they were the first results of perpetual anxiety about money, about his family, and the future prospects of the estate. His voice, formerly so sonorous, had become sharp and hoarse, and irritability appeared in every gesture. The baron had gone through heavy sorrows of late; he had felt deeply the want of money for a great enterprise. Ehrenthal was now a regular visitor at the castle. Every week his horses plucked good hay from the baron's racks, every week he pulled out his pocket-book and brought bills or paid down bank notes. His hand, which at first had, with

respectful haste, been put into his pocket, now slowly and tardily gave up the fluttering papers, his cringing mien had become erect, his submissive smile had changed into a dry salute; he now walked over the farm with a criticizing look, and instead of fulsome praise, blame often fell from his lips; the humble agent had become the arrogant creditor, and the baron suffered with increasing repugnance the pretensions of a man he could not do without. But not Ehrenthal alone knocked at the baron's study—other strange figures made their appearance and negotiated with him secretly. Rough Pinkus's broad figure might be seen every three months walking from the village inn to the castle, and every time his heavy foot trod the stairs, ill-humour entered with him.

Every week Ehrenthal had made his appearance on the estate, but now the hardest time had come, and the man of business was not to be seen. He was on a journey, it was said in the town, and the baron listened anxiously to the noise of every carriage, in the hope that it was the indispensable though hated one.

Leonora went up to her father; she had become a mature beauty, and had a tall, full figure; her thoughtful eye, and the anxious look she cast on the baron, showed that she too had felt the realities of life. "The messenger has brought the post," she said, handing him a packet of letters and newspapers; "of course there is no letter from Eugene."

"He has other things to do now than to write," said the father; but he himself looked eagerly for his son's handwriting. Then he saw a letter directed in an unknown hand, with the post-mark of the town in which Eugene was quartered. It was Anthony's letter. He opened it quickly; he at once perceived the kind intention in its respectful language, and having read the name of Itzig, concealed the letter hastily in his breast pocket. The secret anguish which often oppressed his heart, now came upon him, and was added to by the vexatious idea that his embarrassments had become a topic of conversation abroad: indistinct warnings were the last things he wished for, they only humbled him. He stood long in gloomy silence by his daughter, but as the letter contained news from Eugene, he constrained himself to speak. "A certain Herr Wohlfart has written to me, who is travelling now as a merchant beyond the frontier, and has made Eugene's acquaintance."

"He!" exclaimed Leonora.

"He seems to be an honest man," continued the baron, with constraint; "he speaks warmly of Eugene."

"Indeed!" cried Leonora, delighted; "one may be sure of everything conscientious and trustworthy when one has to deal with him. What a curious chance! the sister, and the brother. What does he write to you about, father?"

"About business: it is probably well intended, but will be of no real use to me. The foolish boys heard indirectly some tittle-tattle, and have become needlessly anxious about my affairs." After these words, he walked moodily towards the factory.

Leonora felt uneasy, and followed him. At last he opened a newspaper and turned the sheets over carelessly, till his eye fell on a judicial advertisement; the blood rushed to his cheeks, the paper fell to the ground, he grasped the rail of a waggon that was near, and

rested his head upon it. Leonora, alarmed, took up the paper, and saw the name of the Polish estate, on which she knew her father had a large mortgage: a day was named for the sale of the property on account of bankruptcy.

This news came upon the baron like a flash of lightning. While encumbering his own property, he had always considered his mortgage on this estate as his safest possession. The thought had come across him sometimes, whether it was not a folly to leave his money far away with others, and to have to borrow at home on hard conditions: he had always shrunk from throwing this sum into his speculations, for he considered it as the jointure for his wife, and his daughter's inheritance. Now this also was in danger, the last security was vanished, all about him tottered. Ehrental had deceived him, he had carried on the correspondence with the agent of the Polish count; he had accounted to him for the full interest of the last term; there could be no doubt that Ehrental had known of the bad state of the Polish property, and had concealed it from him.

"Father," cried out Leonora, raising him up from the waggon, "compose yourself; talk to Ehrental, drive to your lawyer; there will be some help in this misfortune."

"You are right, my child," said the baron, in a dull voice, "it is possible that the danger is not so very great: have the horses put to the carriage; I will go to town. Conceal from your mother what you have read, and do you, dear Leonora, accompany me."

When the carriage drove up, the baron was still on the spot where the news had pierced his heart; he sat silent during the drive—sunk in the corner of the carriage.

As soon as he had put his daughter down at his house, which he had kept, that his wife and friends might not suspect the embarrassed state of his affairs, he himself proceeded to Ehrental's. He entered the office angrily, and, after an abrupt greeting, held out the newspaper to the dealer. Ehrental rose slowly, and nodding his head, said, "I know it; Loewenberg has written to me about it."

"You have deceived me, Herr Ehrental," exclaimed the baron, with difficulty controlling himself.

"For what purpose?" answered the dealer, shrugging up his shoulders: "what use would there be in concealing what must appear in the papers? Such things happen with every mortgage—what is the harm of it?"

"The state of the property is bad; you have long known it, you have cheated me."

"What do you talk about cheating? have a care that no one hears your words. I have lent you money; what interest can I have in lowering you, and increasing your embarrassments? My whole heart," said he, pointing to the region in which that organ is supposed to exist, "is with you: had I known that this factory would swallow up so much good money, one thousand after another, like an insatiable animal. I should have thought twice before I lent you a single thaler. I would willingly feed a herd of elephants with my money, but never again a manufactory. How dare you then say that I have cheated you!"

"You have known about the bankruptcy, and have concealed from me the state of the count's affairs."

"Was it I who sold you the mortgage?" asked the indignant Ehrenthal; I have paid you the interest every half year, that is what I have done wrong; I have paid you money besides, that is my cheating." He continued more moderately, "Look at the matter more calmly, my lord baron; another creditor has claimed the sale of the estate, the court has not announced it to us, or perhaps the letter has miscarried, what does it matter? After the sale you will receive your capital, and then you can satisfy the creditors on your own estate. The domain contains large estates, I am told, and there is no fear for your capital."

With this doubtful hope the baron was obliged to go. Downcast, he entered his carriage, and called out to the coachman, "to Justizrath Horn!" but half way, he stopped him, and ordered him to return home. A coolness had arisen between him and his old legal friend. The baron had been afraid of informing him of his endless embarrassments, and had been annoyed at his kind admonitions, so he had often had recourse to other lawyers.

Itzig, out of delicacy, rushed from the office when he caught sight of the baron's horses in the street. He now put his head in again, "How was he, Herr Ehrenthal?"

"How should he be?" answered Ehrenthal, crossly; "he was like a fish with his fins up, he tossed his head in the air, and I have been much irritated; I have sunk my money in his property, and have as many anxieties about it as I have hairs on my head, all from following your advice."

"If you think that an estate will come swimming to you like a fish in the water, and that you have only to hold out your hand to get hold of it, I pity you," answered Veitel, ironically.

"What am I to do with the factory? The property was worth twice as much to me without its chimney."

"Then sell the bricks when you have got the chimney. I wanted to tell you that I expect a friend from my country, and cannot attend your office to-morrow."

"You have been so much occupied with your own concerns this last year, that I don't care a bit if you stay away from my office still longer."

"Do you know what you have said? You have said to me: 'Itzig, I don't want you any more, you may go.' But I will go when it suits me, not when it suits you."

"You are an insolent fellow. I forbid you to speak to me in that way. Who are you, young Itzig?"

"I am one who knows all your affairs, and can crush you, if I choose. I am one who is your friend—a better friend than you are to yourself—and therefore, when I come to the office the day after to-morrow, you will say to me, 'Good morning, Itzig.' Do you understand me, Herr Ehrenthal?" He took his cap, and hastened into the street, where his suppressed rage against Ehrenthal vented itself. He swung his arms about vehemently, and muttered threatening words: Ehrenthal did the same in his office.

The baron drove back to his daughter. He sat down dejectedly on the sofa, and the affectionate words of Leonora fell unheeded on his

ear. There was nothing to keep him in the town, but his fear of imparting the sad intelligence to the baroness. He was brooding over plans how to make up for the unexpected loss, and painted to himself in the blackest colours the possible consequences of this event. Meanwhile Leonora was sitting at the window, silently looking down at the bustle of the street, on the waggons loaded with goods, on the stream of busy men who were proceeding along the footpaths, incessantly and restlessly toiling after gain and enjoyment. And while Leonora asked herself, whether any one, of all those persons who were passing, had felt the same secret sorrows, fears, and discouragements, which had, in the last few years, invaded her young heart, some looked up from below at the windows of the stately house: their eyes rested admiringly on the beautiful girl, and they envied the good fortune of the aristocracy who looked so quietly from above upon the people who were obliged to toil for their daily bread.

The streets became dark, the light from the lamps threw a faint glimmer into the room. Leonora looked at the shadows and lights moving on the wall, and with the increasing darkness, the anxiety of her heart increased. Two men were standing at the door of the house in eager conversation; one of them entered, the bell rang, and heavy steps were heard in the ante-room. The footman came in and announced Herr Pinkus. At that name the baron started up, asked for a light, and hastened into the adjoining room.

The publican entered the baron's room, and bowed his big head several times, but seemed in no hurry to speak. The baron leant against the table like one who is ready to hear the worst. "What have you to say to me at this hour?"

"My lord baron knows that the bill of ten thousand thalers is due to-morrow?"

"Can you not wait, if I give you ten per cent. for the prolongation? I thought we should only make up the interest account to-morrow."

"If it does not suit you to settle the interest, I do not insist upon it, but I am come to inform you that I am suddenly placed in a position to require money, and must ask you to-morrow for the ten thousand thalers."

The baron stepped back. This was a second blow, and it cut him to the quick. He had had a foreboding that something would come to crush him, and he knew perfectly that all he could say would be of no avail. His face became livid, and he said, "How can you make such a demand, after what we have agreed together? How often have you protested that the form of a bill was nothing but a mere formality?"

"It has been a form hitherto, now it will become a reality: I owe ten thousand thalers to a man whom I must pay to-morrow morning."

"Then you must speak to the man. I am ready to make new concessions, but it is out of my power to pay you now."

"In that case, my lord baron, I shall proceed against you according to law." The baron turned away silently. "At what time may I return to-morrow for my money?"

"About this hour," answered a voice which sounded hollow like that of an old man. Pinkus nodded his head and withdrew. The baron tottered back into his own room—his head sank down on the arm of the sofa, and with a shudder he thought of what was to come.

Leonora knelt by his side; he raised his head and laid it upon her shoulder; she called him by the tenderest names, and implored him to speak to her once again. He heard nothing and saw nothing; every pulse within him beat like a hammer, stronger and stronger, quicker and quicker. The hollow bubble of painted glass that he had blown, had burst; he foreboded a dreadful reality; he was a ruined man.

Thus he sat till a late hour in the evening, when his daughter induced him at last to drink a glass of wine, and to think of returning home. "Yes, away from here," he exclaimed, "into the open air." They drove off, and when the trees on the high road flew past him, and the fresh air blew upon his face, he recovered his spirits a little. This night and the following day were his, and in the course of that time he must find help. It was not the first difficulty he had overcome, and he hoped it would not be the last. He had contracted this debt, of originally seven thousand some hundred thalers, because the scoundrel who had to-night demanded payment, had come to him some years ago and offered him the money—indeed pressed it on him, at first, at the lowest rate of interest. With the confident courage of a fortunate speculator he had accepted the money; it had lain untouched for some weeks, then he had made use of it, and the creditor had gradually increased his demands, till he obtained a promissory note and enormous interest, and now the rogue bullied him. Did he resemble the rat, which, foreseeing the impending shipwreck of the vessel, seeks to save itself? The baron laughed out, in a way that made Leonora shudder. He was not the man to give himself up into the hands of the swindler without assistance; in the course of that night or the following day he must find help. It was impossible that Ehrenthal could forsake him.

He felt the necessity of controlling himself, and succeeded in conversing with his daughter on indifferent things. "Some unpleasant business is pressing upon me just now, and I am quite worn out with the great efforts necessary to meet the many claims made upon me. It will pass, my child; such a time comes to everyone who undertakes large enterprises. When the factory is once at work, I shall have got over the worst."

It was night when they arrived at home, and the baron hurried to his room. He laid himself down on his bed, but this was only to deceive his servants. Here was another night when sleep would not visit his eyelids. One hour after another sounded from the tower of the village church; the baron counted each stroke, and at every fresh hour the blood rushed faster through his veins, and the agony of his mind increased. Where was he to find help. He could think of none but Ehrenthal. Reluctant as he felt, he must present himself before that man as a suppliant; the very thought of it made the perspiration run off his forehead. There he lay wringing his hands; and when sleep, the quiet child of night, approached his couch, the grey spectre of anguish raised itself by his head, and with threatening gestures drove away the benign deity. It was almost morning before he lost the consciousness of his misery.

He was awake by sharp, discordant sounds, which penetrated from the courtyard to his room; the workmen of the factory had come with the village band to serenade him. At any other time he would have



been delighted at this good-hearted zeal; now he heard nothing but discord, and it tormented him. He hastily dressed himself, and hurried into the court. His house was adorned with garlands, the workmen were drawn up before the door, and they received him with loud cheers. He was obliged to address them, and say how happy he was at the arrival of this auspicious day, and how much good he expected would result from the undertaking: and whilst he was speaking he felt how untrue his words were, and how broken his spirit. He ordered the carriage before he had wished his wife and daughter good-morning, and hurried back to the town. He stopped at Ehrenthal's house, and knocked violently at the door of the office; it was closed, and he was obliged to fetch the dealer down from his breakfast.

Disturbed at the unusual earliness of the visit, Ehrenthal made his appearance without having taken the trouble of pulling off the old dressing-gown. The baron explained his request to him as coolly as was possible after his sleepless night. Ehrenthal worked himself up into a state of the greatest indignation. "That Pinkus!" he exclaimed, repeatedly. "He has ventured to lend you money on a bill! How could he lend you so large a sum? The man never owned ten thousand thalers; he is a petty fellow, without means."

The baron acknowledged that the sum had been originally smaller, but this avowal only increased Ehrenthal's agitation.

"From seven to ten!" he ejaculated, rushing vehemently to and fro, so that his dressing-gown floated about like the wings of an owl. "He has gained almost three thousand thalers! I have always mistrusted that fellow; now I know what he is. He is a spy—a double-faced hypocrite! He has not given the seven thousand either; his whole business is not worth the sum."

The violent indignation of the dealer raised the hopes of the baron. How much he had wronged this man in his thoughts! "I also have reason to consider Pinkus a dangerous fellow," he said.

But this assent only did the baron mischief; Ehrenthal's rage was now directed against him. "What can I say against Pinkus? he has acted as a man of his class ought to act. But you, who are a nobleman, how could you act to me in such a manner? You have been dealing with others behind my back, and you have enabled him to gain, in a short time, forty per cent. upon a bill. Upon a bill!" he continued. "Do you know what that means—a bill?"

"I wish it had not been necessary to incur the debt," answered the baron; "but as the bill is due to-day, and the man will not agree to a further prolongation, we must endeavour to provide for the payment."

"What do you mean by we?" burst out Ehrenthal, furiously; "you must provide for the payment—you must look to it—how to get money for the man into whose pocket you have put three thousand thalers! You did not ask me when you gave the bill—you need not ask me now how you are to pay the money."

Alarm and anger struggled in the mind of the baron. "Moderate your language, Herr Ehrenthal."

"Why should I moderate my language? You have not acted with moderation, Pinkus has not acted with moderation, and I will have none."

"I will return when you have more control over yourself, which, at all events, I can lay claim to."

"If you want money from me, do not return, my lord baron; I have no money for you. I would rather throw my thalers in the streets than lend you one more on your estate."

The baron left the room silently. His misery was great; he was obliged to put up with the abusive language of this vulgar man. He then drove about the town to his friends, and went through the torture of constantly begging for money, and always getting refusals. By noon his energy was gone; he returned to his house, and reflected whether he should go once more to Ehrenthal, or refuse the payment of the bill on account of the usurious interest. At that moment the man who, though in a far different circle, had long been lurking round him—he, the future possessor of the property, the heir of the Rothsattels—glided into the room. The baron looked with astonishment at the strange figure, which he had scarcely ever seen before, as it entered his room: a haggard face, surrounded by red hair, crafty eyes and a mouth with a grotesque expression, such as one sees on laughing masks at a carnival, met his view.

Veitel bowed low, and began: "Most worthy lord baron, have the kindness to pardon me for troubling you on a matter of business. I am charged by Herr Pinkus to raise money upon a bill; I come to ask you most humbly whether you would have the goodness to pay me the amount."

In spite of the gloomy position of the baron, he could not refrain from smiling when he saw the lanky figure, writhing and grinning in its ludicrous endeavours to be polite. "Who are you?" he asked, with a dignity befitting a grandee.

"My name is Veitel Itzig, worthy sir, if I may venture to tell it you."

The baron shuddered when he heard the name of Itzig; it was the man against whom he had been warned, the invisible, the pitiless one. Again his heart was oppressed with anguish.

"I have been book-keeper at Ehrenthal's, but he is becoming too grand for me; I have inherited a small fortune, and have invested it in Pinkus' business. I am now about to set up for myself."

"You cannot have the money now," answered the baron, more calmly. He thought the cringing figure could hardly be a dangerous antagonist.

"Well," said Veitel, "it is an honour to me to know that the worthy baron will pay me in the afternoon. There is still time." He took out a silver watch. "I can wait till evening; and that I may not trouble my lord baron by returning again at an hour when it might be inconvenient to him, or when he might not be at home, I will take the liberty of waiting on the stairs. 'I can stand,' he said, as if he wished to decline an invitation from the baron to sit there. 'I will stay till five in the evening; the baron need not mind me in the least.'" There was something that sounded like scorn in the humble tone assumed by Veitel, and the baron felt again in his heart the seriousness of his position. Veitel went bowing and backing to the door like a crab, but the baron recalled him. As if fastened by a spell, he remained in his bent attitude, and at that moment he looked like a weak, whimsical fellow. The warning letter, the baron thought, had perhaps laid to the charge of the poor book-keeper what Ehrenthal himself had contrived. At any rate, it was easier to deal with this man than with any other.

"How can I meet this demand without paying the money to-day?" said the baron after a great effort.

Veitel's eyes flashed like those of a bird of prey, he shook his head and shrugged his shoulders, whilst he assumed an air of reflection. "Most worthy lord baron," he said, at last, "perhaps there may be a way, the only way left. You have a mortgage of twenty thousand thalers on your estate, which belongs to you, and which lies at Ehrenthal's office. I will persuade Pinkus to leave this ten thousand with you, and I will procure you ten thousand more, if you will give up this mortgage to my friend."

The baron was startled. "Perhaps you do not know that I have already given this mortgage to Ehrenthal?"

"I beg your pardon, worthy sir; that you have not done, there has been no judicial session."

"But I have given my promise in writing."

Veitel shrugged his shoulders: "If you have promised to give Ehrenthal a mortgage in exchange for his money, why should it be just this one? and why do you want a mortgage for Ehrenthal? This year you will get the capital you have invested in the domain of Rosmin, and then you can pay him in ready money; till then, leave the mortgage quietly in his hands, nobody need know that you have ceded it to us. If you will have the goodness to come with me to a notary, and make the mortgage over before him to my friend, I will furnish you with two thousand thalers this very day, and on the day when you place the document in our hands, I will pay the rest."

The baron had affected to listen to this proposal with a smile; at last he said shortly, "I cannot accept your offer, think of some other expedient."

"There is none," said Veitel; "but it is only noon, and I can wait till five." He repeated again his low bows, and when he got to the door turned once more. "The money you require now," he said, seriously, "is not only the ten thousand thalers; in the course of the next few months, much will be wanted for your factory, and also to rescue your capital on the Polish domain. If you will make over the mortgage to me, you shall have the whole sum. One thing more I must beg of you, worthy sir, be pleased not to mention this affair to Ehrenthal—he is a hard man, and would injure me for the rest of my life."

"Do not be afraid," said the baron, dismissing him with a motion of his hand. Veitel departed.

The baron paced up and down the room with heavy steps; what had been proposed to him moved him deeply. It would indeed save him from this, and other impending difficulties; but he could not agree to it, that was out of the question: the man who had made him the offer was a contemptible fellow; it was impossible to be angry with him, he did not know any better. But the baron had pledged his word, and he must not think of the matter any further.

And yet, how trifling was the danger for him!—the document would remain quietly in Ehrenthal's hand until the baron received his Polish money, then he would pay in cash to Ehrenthal, and release his document. No human being need know anything about the transaction, and if it came to the worst, he would have a new mortgage made on his estate for Ehrenthal, and would allow him a com-

pensation besides, and the money-dealer would be content. He endeavoured to drive these thoughts from him, but they returned incessantly. It struck one, it struck two; he rang for the servant and ordered the carriage, and casually asked if the stranger was in the house. The carriage came; the stranger was standing at the foot of the staircase; the baron went down-stairs and got into the carriage without looking at him. When the servant inquired where the coachman should drive, it for the first time occurred to him that he did not know; at last he said to Ehrenthal's.

Ehrenthal, in the meanwhile, passed a troubled morning. The bold encroachment on his rights, which had been made by a third person, led him to suspect that, besides himself, there was some unknown person speculating upon the baron. He sent for Pinkus, overwhelmed him with reproaches, and endeavoured in every way to ascertain how he had obtained the money; but Pinkus was well-schooled, opposed to him an iron front, and was very rude; upon which Ehrenthal sent for Itzig, but Itzig was nowhere to be found.

When, therefore, the baron drove again to his door, Ehrenthal was in very bad humour; he knew well that this fresh debt was not necessary to dispossess the baron quietly of his property, in the course of a few years, and he was very angry with him for the folly which occasioned him such useless embarrassment. He told him dryly, that he must cease to make him any further advances. There was another violent scene; the baron went exasperated out of the office, got into his carriage, and determined upon making one last attempt with an old comrade of his, who was known to be a rich man.

It was past four o'clock when he returned to his house hopeless. The haggard figure still leaned against the staircase, bowed low as the baron passed, and remained quietly standing. The baron's strength was exhausted; he threw himself down on the couch, as he had done the day before, and fixed his eyes on the ground. There was no means of rescue—he knew that well—none but that which was offered by him, who was lurking below in the shadow of the pillars. In desolate listlessness, he awaited what would happen, motionless, without raising his head from the arm of the sofa; he heard all the quarters strike between four and five, they seemed to fall upon his head like a hammer, and each stroke brought him nearer to the moment when his destiny would be decided. The last stroke of the fifth hour had ceased vibrating, the bell-rope in the ante-room shook, the baron rose from his seat, and Itzig entered the door, holding two papers in his hand.

"I cannot pay," said the baron to him in a hoarse voice.

Itzig bowed again, and presented to him one of the papers; "Here is the sketch of an agreement."

The baron seized his hat, and said, without looking at him: "Come along to a notary."

'Twas night when the baron returned to the castle of his ancestors. The pale moonlight glittered on the turrets and projecting parts of the building, the lake looked dark as pitch, the buttresses which supported the house were black, and the face of the man who leaned back in his carriage was as colourless; his lips were compressed, like one who had come to a decision after a long struggle. He looked with

indifference on the water, and on the walls of his house, and on the roof which was lighted up by the cold rays of the moon ; but he was glad it was not the sun that was shining, and that he had not to look on the house of his fathers in the golden light of day. He endeavoured to form plans for the future, which was now more secure ; he calculated all the profits which he hoped to receive from his factory ; he even thought of the time when hisson would dwell there as a rich man, without the anxieties which had driven the father into intercourse with low usurers, and had bleached his hair. He thought of everything ; but pleasant thoughts had lost their charm and passed quickly from him. He descended from the carriage, and secured his replenished pocket-book, before he greeted his wife and daughter with a nod of the head, which was intended to calm their anxiety. He talked cheerfully to the ladies, and succeeded in joking upon the troublesome day's business he had had ; but he felt that something had stepped between him and those he loved, and they appeared like strangers to him. When they clung to him and took his hand, he shrunk gently away as if he ought to withdraw it. And when his wife looked tenderly at him, there was something in her look, which formerly, even in his greatest sorrows, had been a comfort to him, but which now he could not endure, and he cast his eyes down. He walked to the factory, where the people were still waiting for their lord's arrival, and looked at his initials sparkling over the door in coloured lamps, surmounted by the family coronet of seven spikes ; and he turned away his eyes, for the lustre of the lamps burnt into his soul.

Joy reigned around him ; the workmen cheered him repeatedly ; and the village band played merry dances. It played also the very march, to the sound of which he had often defiled with his regiment before the old general, who had loved the young officer like a father ; he thought of the old warrior's scarred face and of his comrades ; he thought of a court of honour once held by the officers of the regiment, over an unhappy man who had too lightly given his word of honour, and broken it. He went to his bedroom, and felt easier when all was dark around him, and he could see nothing—neither his castle, nor his factory, nor the searching looks of his wife. Again, as he lay on his couch, he heard one hour strike after the other, and each stroke reminded him that there was now another man of the regiment, who, with grey hairs, had done the very same thing that formerly drove a youth to blow out his brains, and here the man was lying, and sleep fled from him, because he had broken his word of honour.

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## CHAPTER V.

THE storms of spring had swept over the flat country before Anthony returned to the office : the winter had been a time of hard work and trouble to him. More than once he had travelled from the foreign city through frost and snow, through desolate provinces, far into the east and south, to the mountains of Transylvania and the pasture-grounds of the Magyars. He had seen many sorrowful scenes—

noblemen's houses burnt down, wealth destroyed, vacillating men, hunger, brutality, and the virulent hatred of factions.

"At what hour will he come?" asked Sabine of her brother.

"In a few hours—by the next train."

Sabine sprang up and took her bunch of keys. "And the maids are not ready! I must put things to rights myself. To-night, Traugott, he shall sup with us: we ladies also wish to see something of him."

The brother laughed. "Mind you don't spoil him."

"There is no fear of that," said the aunt: "when he is once again shut up in the office, he will stick there as in a drawer; except at dinner one has no chance of seeing him."

Meanwhile, Sabine was exploring her treasures. She loaded the servant's arms with all sorts of things, and looked impatiently into the court, to see if the gentlemen had returned from their rooms to the office. At length she glided quietly into Anthony's room; she cast a look on the sofa cushion she had worked for the absent one, and arranged all the flowers the gardener had been able to find in an alabaster vase. As she bent over the vase, her eyes fell on the wall where the drawing hung which Anthony had made soon after his arrival, and on the costly carpet which Fink had laid on the floor. She had not been in the room for a long time, as she had always avoided it whilst Fink was an inmate of the house. Where was he living now? She felt as if she had been separated from him for many, many years, and the recollection of him, to her, was like a bitter dream. To the honourable-minded man who now dwelt there, she could say, openly, how dear he had become to her, and she looked forward joyfully to the hour when she could thank him for all he had done for her brother!

"But, Sabine!" cried out the aunt at the door, for she had slipped quietly into the room of her dinner-table companion.

"What is the matter?" exclaimed Sabine, looking up.

"You have actually put up the embroidered curtains. They do not belong to the rooms in which the clerks live."

"Let them remain where they are," said Sabine, smiling.

"And the covers and towels, too; it is unheard of; they are the best we have. Good gracious! the coverlid trimmed with lace, and a pink lining into the bargain."

"Never mind, aunt," said Sabine, colouring, "he who comes to-day has well deserved the best that can be found in our old presses."

The aunt, however, continued to shake her head. "If I had not seen it with my own eyes I never would have believed it. To give such things for daily use! I don't understand you, Sabine. By degrees he must be taken down a peg; but he won't notice it, that is my comfort. To think that I should live to see such things!" She clasped her hands, and left the room in a state of great excitement.

Sabine again took her keys and hastened after her. "She talks such nonsense," she said to herself, "I must convince her that it is all right."

Meanwhile, the traveller felt like a son, who, after a long absence, returns to his father's house. At the last station before he arrived at the capital, his heart beat with joyful emotion. The old house and

his colleagues, the business and his desk, the chief and Sabine, all passed in bright images before his eyes. At last the droschky stopped before the open hall door. There stood the waggons, the casks, and the ladders; there was Father Sturm, who called to him, with a voice that sounded clear across the broad street, dashed open the carriage-door, and lifted him out, as a father would his child. Herr Pix rushed into the street, and shook him by the hand for a long while, and in his joy did not remark that in the meantime his black brush, in consequence of these movements, was painting all kinds of strokes and points on Anthony's fur coat. Anthony then passed by the great scales, gave the chains a pleasant shake with his hand, and passed on into the front office, where the lamps were already lit, giving him a hearty welcome. His colleagues rose all at once with a loud exclamation, and gathered round him. Herr Suhroeter came from the back room, and as he cried out his welcome, and held out his hand to him, a bright ray of joy passed over his countenance. These were happy minutes, and Anthony was more affected than became a man who had seen the world. When, after the first questions and answers, he was going to his room, Pluto sprang impetuously upon him, and wagged his shaggy tail vigorously, and Anthony had great trouble to keep off his caresses. At his room, his servant met him with a delighted smile, and opened the door respectfully. Anthony looked round him with surprise; the room was festively adorned, a comfortable fire was blazing in the stove, a fresh garland was hanging over the door, on the sofa a new embroidered cushion; a smart set of tea-things was standing on the table, and near it an alabaster vase of flowers. "The Fraulein has arranged all this herself," Franz confided to him. Anthony bent over the vase and examined every single flower carefully. On the whole they were not unlike other natural products of that kind, but Anthony gazed on them as if he had never seen anything like them before. Then he took up the cushion, felt and stroked the embroidery, and put it back in its place full of admiration; lastly, he took the cat up in his hand, patted it on the back, and replaced it on the desk as carefully as he would have done a living creature, and the cat was not insensible to such kindness, for it shone brightly in the red light of the fire, and there was a sound through the room like a gentle purring.

Anthony hastened back to the office to report to the chief his last proceedings. The merchant took him into his small room, and talked over the events of the past time with him as confidentially as one would discuss the most important matters with a friend. It was, however, a serious conversation. Much had been lost, and much was still in danger. While abroad, Anthony had become aware of the whole weight of the danger that had menaced the Firm, and he perceived that it would be the work of many years to make up for the losses and to form new ties in the place of those which were broken. The merchant briefly expressed the same opinion, and said, in conclusion, "I owe much to your prudence and energy, and hope you will help me to recover the lost ground in some other way; what is unavoidable we must bear." Then, as Anthony was going out, he called after him, smiling, "There is still some one who wishes to thank you; I invite you to be my guest this evening."

Anthony went to his long-closed desk, opened it, and replenished

it with paper and pens, but there was no writing that evening. Jordan refused to give him any letters; both offices were in a state of excitement; one after another left his chair to go to Anthony. Herr Bauman tapped his next-door neighbour on the back, and returned well pleased to his place; Herr Specht perched himself on the balustrade near Anthony's seat in great excitement, and his questions and ejaculations of surprise flowed upon Anthony like a torrent; Herr Liebold placed the sheet of blotting-paper in the ledger several minutes before the closing hour, and moved into the front office; and even Herr Purzel came out of his box, holding the sacred chalk in his hand. At last Herr Pix entered the room, in order to tell Anthony that he had not played a party at solo for some months, and that Herr Specht, in the meanwhile, had got into a state which bore a considerable resemblance to madness.

In the evening, Anthony went to the apartments on the first floor. The portier was drawn aside, and Sabine stood before him. There was a smile upon her lips, but her eyes glistened with moisture as she bent over the hand that had saved her brother's life.

"Fraulein!" exclaimed Anthony, amazed, and trying to withdraw his hand.

"I thank you—ah! I thank you, Wohlfart!" cried Sabine, holding him with both her hands. She looked at him silently, her countenance inspired by an emotion she could not control.

While Anthony contemplated the young girl, who looked up to him with blushing cheeks, so agitated and so grateful, he discovered that, since the cut of the Slavonian sword, his relation to the family and to her was altered. The barrier had fallen which had hitherto separated the clerk in the office from the young lady, and he felt with a proud joy, which raised his spirits, that his energy and self-possession had rendered him worthy of being trusted and confided in by a woman.

He related to her again what she was so anxious to hear from his lips—the struggle about the waggons, and the terrors of that wild time. Sabine listened attentively to his words; to her he had become like another being; his features were more decided, his demeanour more manly, his conversation more energetic. Her eyes turned to meet his clear glance, and when his happy look fell upon her she cast them down involuntarily. She had never remarked how handsome and noble-looking he was, but this night she saw that also. An open, manly countenance, auburn locks, beautiful dark blue eyes, an expressive mouth, and a delicate colour on the cheeks, which varied with his increasing emotion like the bright sunshine on a smiling landscape. He had become new to her, and yet was like a dear, intimate friend.

The aunt now came in: the embroidered curtains had raised an agitation in her mind which was not yet allayed, and showed itself in a silk dress and a new hood. Her greeting was loud and loquacious, and her remark, that the new-grown whiskers were very becoming to Herr Wohlfart, was confirmed by the niece with a silent nod.

"You have got the hero of the office there," exclaimed the merchant; "now show that you can reward knightly service better than by fine speeches; serve him with the best our kitchen and cellar can produce. Come, my trusty companion, the Rhine wine awaits you; after your many heavy Polish drinks, you will do it honour."



The quiet light of the lamp diffused an air of comfort round the room in which the four sat down to supper. The merchant held his glass across the table to Anthony, saying, "Welcome home!"

"Welcome in the house!" called out Sabine.

He replied, in a low voice, "I have a home, I have a house, in which I feel happy; through your kindness I have obtained both. Many an evening, while I was sitting in a wretched inn, in a foreign land, amongst strangers, whose language I understood but imperfectly, I thought of this table, and how delighted I should be to see these rooms and your faces again; for it is the bitterest thing upon earth to feel oneself, in the hours of repose, without a friend, and away from the place to which one's heart clings."

When he left them at a late hour, the merchant said, on wishing him good night, "Wohlfart, I wish to bind you more closely to this house. Jordan leaves us next quarter to become a partner in his uncle's business; I have chosen you to fill his place; I know that I cannot have a better man for my proxy."

When Anthony returned to his room, he felt, as it is only permitted to men to feel for a few hours of their lives, without suffering for it—that he was happy, free from remorse, and had all he could desire. He seated himself on the sofa, looked at the cushion and flowers, and his thoughts flew back to the last hours. Again and again he saw Sabine before him, as she bent over his hand and thanked him. Long he sat there in pleasant dreams, and laid his weary head upon the silk arabesques, which Sabine's hand had embroidered.

His eyes now fell upon the table, on which lay a letter; the postmark was New York, and the direction in Fink's handwriting.

Fink had written to him several times during the first years of their separation, generally only a few lines, never about his own affairs, still less about the plans he had formed for the future when they were together. Since then a long time had elapsed, during which Anthony was left without any news of his friend; he only knew that Fink had spent much of his time travelling in the western parts of the United States, where he was employed as the agent of the firm of which his uncle had been the head, and in the interest of various companies in which the old man had had a share. This night Anthony was startled by reading as follows:—

"I must at last tell, what hitherto I have concealed from you, my poor lad. I have been amongst robbers and murderers. If you want a hardened cut-throat, apply to me. I envy a fellow who turns rascal of his own accord; he has, at least, the pleasure of making a sly bargain with the devil, and can choose the kind of rascalities in which he feels most at home. My lot is disagreeable: I am pushed on by the pressure of villainies plotted by others, in a way that fearfully resembles the course of an avalanche, when it is preparing for its last spring into the deep. Like a rock in the midst of icebergs I stand, pressed on all sides, by the icy cold of the most fearful speculations that the greatest usurers have ever thought of. The departed has been so kind as to make me heir to his favourite project—a speculation in land. I long avoided entering into the details of this business. I made Westlock work at that part of the inheritance for a year: if that was cowardly, I found an excuse, in the quantity of labour which

the exchange affairs of the deceased gentleman occasioned me. At last it became necessary for me to undertake the other work also; and if I had before a very distinct foreboding of the portentous dimensions of the air-bladder the defunct carried about with him, in the place of a conscience, I now feel certain that the object of his will, was to revenge himself upon me for my childish delinquencies, by making me the partner of old weather-beaten villains, whose cunning is such that Satan himself would put his tail in his pocket and run away from them.

"This letter comes to you from a new town in Tennessee—an agreeable place, which is not the better for having been built on speculation with my money. It consists of some wooden huts, half of them gin-shops, filled up to the roof with dirty, reprobate dregs of emigrants, the greater part of whom are laid up with filth, and fever. Even those who are still moving about are a hollow-eyed, worn-out lot, all of them candidates for death. Every day, when the poor devils behold the rising sun, and feel the impudent wish to eat and drink, their favourite occupation is to curse the land-sharks who have taken their money for the cost of transport, land, and improvements, and brought them into this country, which for two months in the year is under water, and for the remaining time looks more like tough pap than any kind of soil. Now, the persons who have showed them this muddy way to heaven are my agents and allies, and I, Fritz Fink, am the happy man who is pelted hourly with every curse to be found in the German and Irish languages. Whoever has sound legs I send away; those who crawl about as inhabitants of my hospital, I feed with Indian corn and quinine. While I am writing this, three naked Paddy children, whose mothers have neglected their duties, so far as to leave this valley of tears, are crawling about on the floor of my room, and I enjoy the advantage of acting nurse to these frog-like little monsters—an agreeable occupation for my father's son! I do not know how long I must stick here, probably till the last man is dead.

"Meanwhile I have fallen out with my partners at New York. I have had the pleasure of exciting universal dissatisfaction. The shareholders of the Great West Land Company assembled, made speeches against me, and drew up resolutions. I should not care about it, if I could see a way of getting rid of this gang; but the defunct has managed matters so cleverly, that I am tied up as fast as a negro in a slave ship. Enormous sums have been thrown into this wild speculation. If I throw up the concern, I am sure that they will find means of making me pay the whole sum for which the deceased had become answerable, and I do not yet see how I could manage that, without not only ruining myself, but also the firm of Fink and Becker.

"However, I don't wish to hear your advice as to what I should do; it will be of no use to me, as I know it already. I don't wish for any letter from you, you simple, old-fashioned Tony, who think it as simple a thing to act honestly, as to spread bread and butter. When I have done my best, buried some, fed the others, and vexed my partners as much as possible, then I shall move for some months farther west, into an honest prairie, where I shall find less croaking of alligators and screeching of owls, and something more aristocratic

than here. If ink and paper exist in the prairie, I will write again. If this letter is the last you receive from me, devote a tear to my memory, and say in your pathetic way, 'It is a pity, poor fellow! he had his good points.'"

An accurate description of Fink's affairs, and the statutes of the land company followed.

Anthony read this desponding letter several times, and, in spite of his friend's prohibition, sat down to his desk, and passed the night in writing to him.

Even in the calm reality of the following days, Anthony continued in a state of exaltation. While he was working in his office, or jesting with his colleagues, he felt how deeply his existence was now rooted within the walls of that great house. It became apparent, even to others. At dinner the conversation was more lively than ever; it was carried on, not only by the Principal, but by Anthony and Sabine. At a period when commerce afforded little pleasure, a new life seemed to have come to these three. The merchant talked almost exclusively to Anthony, and when Anthony spoke, the whole circle listened attentively, and sometimes a merry laugh broke out from the colleagues all round the table. In the evening also Anthony was a privileged person. He was often invited to the upper house, and sat with the ladies and the Principal at the same table; and it might be seen on the countenance of the master of the house, how dear to him were his personal relations to the man who was so identified with the interests of his business, and in whose fresh and well-regulated mind he recognised an image of his own youth.

To Sabine these hours were a great enjoyment. It was a pleasant surprise to her to find, when in conversation over the news of the day, or over a book they had read, or about something they had seen and felt, that the man who had lived so close to them for years, should agree with her in so many things. His good sense and information astonished her. As the traveller looks with surprise on a rich landscape which has been concealed from him by floating mist, so did she suddenly perceive his fine mind, in all its brilliant colours.

His colleagues peaceably made up their minds to his privileged position. They all knew, from their chief's own lips, that he had saved his life; and this circumstance was acknowledged, even by Herr Pix, to be a reason for Anthony's invitations to the upper house. Anthony did all in his power to maintain the regard of his fellow-clerks. On spare evenings he invited them separately to his own room, and often the whole company assembled there. Jordan smilingly complained that he was already in his life-time forgotten, and the office got accustomed to consider Anthony as his successor, and the quiet Mentor of the juniors. Anthony liked Bauman's company best of all, who in the last half year had had violent fits of missionary longings, and was only retained by the conviction, that, in the present difficulties, a practised accountant was indispensable to the business. The fantastic Specht was the most eager of all for Anthony's favour. In his eyes, the traveller had acquired a romantic glory. Herr Specht's imagination painted in the most glowing colours all that Anthony had gone through, and he was bent upon surmising that his colleague had met with no end of charming and

awful adventures, besides those he acknowledged, which he was compelled by mysterious circumstances to keep secret.

I am sorry to say that his own position with his colleagues had suffered much during Anthony's absence. He had formerly been the support of their good humour, like a slender tree, round which creepers twine, and he was often nearly stifled by the flowers of their wit. Now Anthony saw with regret that the good Herr Specht was universally neglected. Even the quartet had given him up; at least, a dark cloud of discontent hung between him and the two basses. Whenever Specht advanced an opinion which was not unassailable, Pix shrugged his shoulders, and encountered him with the unbecoming word "Pumpkin." Almost all that Specht said was answered by "Pumpkin." Even at dinner this fruit rolled about the lower regions, from one mouth to another; and whenever the word was spoken, Herr Specht got into a violent passion, broke off the conversation deeply hurt, and retired within himself.

One evening Anthony called at the door of the outlaw. Already before he opened it, he heard the shrill voice of his colleague singing from his elevated abode (Herr Specht lived on the third floor) the famous song, "Here I sit on turf, with violets crowned." When Anthony gently opened the door, Specht was sitting, with his lamp on the table, gracefully leaning on one arm in an artistic attitude, and sang with such real delight, that Anthony stopped a minute, not to disturb his enthusiasm. The room which Specht inhabited was not large, and his imagination had been working for years to give it a character different from common rooms. In fact, it was unlike any other human abode. All the walls were covered with pictures and portraits of celebrated actresses, many in the costumes of their famous parts: amongst them, numerous brackets, on which stood small vases, shells, plaster figures, and other curiosities. As the number of brackets was greater than the objects to be placed on them, Specht had ornamented the empty ones with cups and champagne bottles. Over the bed an immense knight's shield of shining brass was hanging, and by its side large fencing-gloves and a quiver of arrows; above the arrows, a scroll was attached to the wall, on which was painted a death's head and cross-bones, with the warning inscription, "Poisoned!!!"

However, the centre of the room was the most striking in its arrangement. There, a stupendous hoop, a little higher than the height of a man, was suspended, fastened with strings to a hook in the ceiling. Beneath it stood large earthenware vessels filled with mould, and from these vessels numerous strings were stretched up to the hoop. In the middle, under the hoop, stood a garden-table of knotted branches, and some chairs of willow twigs. This arrangement gave the room an extraordinary aspect, and free circulation became thereby very difficult to any one, except the experienced inhabitant. It was impossible to guess the object of this remarkable structure; but at all events, the primitive table, the chairs, and the earthen pots, recalled to mind, in some degree, gardens and nature, while the extended strings had some faint likeness to the corded ladders which lead up to the mast-head of a vessel. At last Anthony inclined to the idea, that this invention represented a man-trap, constructed after the pattern of a cobweb, and calculated to lay hold of

the heads and legs of malicious colleagues. At all events, Herr Specht was sitting in the middle of the net-work, as its director, and his syren song might probably be intended to allure those, who entered the room, into the trap, under the illusion of green turf and imaginary wreaths of violets.

Anthony stopped outside the trap, and called out from the door, "What the devil have you spread over your room?"

Specht started up with sparkling eyes, and answered, "It is a bower."

"A bower! I see nothing green."

"It is coming," said Specht, conducting his visitor to the vases.

Looking nearer, Anthony discovered in the pots some weak shoots of ivy, looking dusty and withered, like the remains of indistinct dreams, which cling to the imagination some minutes after you awake, and then dissolve for ever.

"But, Specht, this ivy will not succeed."

"It is not alone," said Specht, with a mysterious air; "see, here is something else." And he pointed to some thin sprigs growing in the pots, which could be compared to nothing else than the unhappy attempts to shoot, made by potatoes in warm cellars, on the arrival of spring.

"And what are these shoots?"

"They are beans and pumpkins," said Herr Specht. "The whole will be a pumpkin bower; in a few weeks the strings will be covered with tendrils. Only think, Wohlfart, what a wonderful sight it will be! On all sides green tendrils, flowers, and large leaves; the whole will be a tent with two entrances. Most of the pumpkins I shall cut, as the weight might be too much, but I shall leave some, and support them with nets. Pray imagine the thick green, with yellow flowers between: how charming it will look! It will be a seat for good friends to drink a glass of wine in, or to sing a quartet."

"Alas! the good friends had abandoned Herr Specht. However, every Sunday he had half a bottle of wine brought up by the servant, placed four glasses on the table, and drank them all off, one after the other."

"But, Specht," asked Anthony, laughing, "can you believe in good earnest that the pumpkins will grow in your room?"

"Why should they not grow?" said he, indignantly. "They are just like any others. They have sun, I give them fresh air, I moisten them with ox-blood; they have all they want."

"But they look very sickly."

"That is only the beginning. The air outside is still cold, and we have had some weeks without sunshine. Later they will make a sudden start. When one has not a garden, one must do the best one can." He looked about the room, pleased. "Look you, in decorating a room, I will match any rich man—of course, in proportion to my means. I don't care for oil-paintings; they generally become black. My prints, at the worst, get somewhat lighter. My room is not large, but it is comfortable. I have spent money on it, which has made it pretty."

"Yes," answered Anthony, "it is very comfortable, except for some troublesome people, who have the bad habit of standing and

walking about upright; one must give up that here, and have only such visitors as will sit down as soon as they come in."

"Sitting still is one of the first conditions of conversation," replied Specht. "Unfortunately, some men are bad and heartless. "Don't you think, Wohlfart," he added in a whisper, "that some of our colleagues are unfeeling?"

"Sometimes a little rough, but their intentions are good."

"I don't find that," said Specht, sighing. "I am now quite alone, and am obliged to look for comfort out-of-doors. When I can, I go to the theatre, or to the circus, if a dwarf or a seal is to be seen, and, of course, to the concerts."

"But that does not save you from solitude."

"No," replied Specht, "for it costs money, and you know that I have no great allowance; and I fear that I shall never get much more than I do now. From my parents I had some fortune," he said, consequentially, "but a cousin of mine, who was my guardian, cheated me out of it. If I had it still, I might, perhaps, drive in a coach-and-four, but, believe me, I should not be happier for it. If only that Pix would not be so insolent!" he said again, in a plaintive voice; "it is dreadful to bear that every day. While you were travelling, I wanted to call him out." As he said this he pointed to an old rapier which was sticking out from behind the bed. "But he behaved shamefully. I wrote to him that I was sorry to be obliged to challenge him, and that it was a matter of indifference to me where we should fight. I proposed to him either the hill behind the promenade or the upper loft, which is large enough, and begged him to name the weapons he preferred. He answered me very uncivilly, that he would fight a duel only in the entrance-hall, where he spent all the hours of the day; and as to weapons, I might choose what I pleased, as his would be the great brush, and he was ready to put his mark on both my cheeks. You will agree that I could not consent to that."

Anthony agreed.

"Now he is setting the others against me," said Specht, sadly. "This state of things is unbearable to me. I cannot stay with the others without being insulted. But I know how to be revenged; I am saving money, and when the pumpkins come into bloom I will give them all a treat except Pix, whom I will not ask, as he did once to you, Wohlfart. I will revenge us both on him."

"Capital!" said Anthony. "I like the idea; but it occurs to me that I also owe my colleagues some attention, so we will give the entertainment together in your room."

"That is splendid of you," exclaimed Specht, delighted.

"And we will not wait," said Anthony, "till the pumpkins become large, but will procure some other green for the purpose."

"All right," said Specht; "perhaps fir-twigs will do?"

"I will take care of that," continued Anthony; "and finally, we will not exclude Pix, but make a point of inviting him; that will be a much finer revenge, and more worthy of your kind heart."

"Do you think so?" asked Specht, doubtfully.

"Decidedly," said Anthony. "I propose next Saturday we will send joint invitations."

"Written ones," exclaimed Specht, enchanted, "and on pink paper."

"Very well," said Anthony; and they continued sitting in the bower, deliberating on the details of the feast.

The colleagues were not a little surprised when, some days afterwards, they found the pink notes, which Herr Specht had, secretly, before the opening of the office, laid in their respective places, inviting them to Herr Specht's room on the occasion of the flowering of the pumpkins, and as Anthony's honoured signature was attached to it, they could not but accept the invitation. Meanwhile Anthony confided the secret to Sabine, and begged her to give him some ivy plants and any other flowers she could spare; but Specht was working the whole week in his room with closed doors; and on the day of the feast, with the assistance of the servant, he twined green tendrils round the bare threads, arranged some blooming shrubs, collected a quantity of coloured lamps, and fastened to the tendrils funnel-shaped inventions of his own of yellow and white paper, which bore a peculiar resemblance to the pumpkin blossom.

By these contrivances the room assumed the appearance which Herr Specht had for a long time seen in his dreams. The colleagues were greatly surprised: Herr Pix entered last, and could not help exclaiming with astonishment, "Good heavens!" when he beheld the unlucky bower now really green, and covered with yellow blossoms, looking very bright in the light of the coloured lamps, and nodding graciously from their slender wires. The large earthen pots were hidden by shrubs, a red lamp was suspended from the middle of the bower, like a glow-worm, and on the rustic table was placed a gigantic pumpkin. Anthony invited the quartet into the bower, and seated himself with the others in the unoccupied parts of the room: even the bed was covered with quilts, to form a second sofa.

When all were seated, Specht went up to the huge pumpkin, and said, solemnly, "You have long been making fun of me about the pumpkin, here is my revenge, behold the pumpkin!" He laid hold of the short stalk and lifted the upper part: the pumpkin was hollow; a bowl of punch stood within.

The colleagues all laughed, and cried out "Bravo!" and Specht filled the glasses.

Nevertheless, there was at first a certain constraint between Herr Specht and the other gentlemen, which was very apparent; it is true, the fatal word was not repeated, but his remarks seldom met with a kind reception. When Anthony brought in a bundle of Turkish pipes, which he had purchased abroad for his colleagues, and presented them to the company, Specht proposed that they should all sit cross-legged like Turks, on the bed, or floor, but the idea was rejected; also when he maintained, that in consequence of the greater extension of our commercial relations with the East, the Circassian maidens, who had hitherto been sold by their parents into Turkish families, would come to our country and act as barmaids in the *Bairischer* beer-houses, no one would agree to his proposition. However, by degrees, the mild contents of the pumpkin worked upon the hard souls of the guests.

First, the discord amongst the musical members of the house was arranged; Anthony toasted the quartet, the quartet thanked him with some embarrassment, as it had been dissolved a month ago. The basses alluded darkly to Herr Specht having made unconscionable

demands upon them. Herr Specht had wished to make use of them to serenade the enchanting Tilleby, one of the horsewomen of the circus. The basses had refused to take an active part in such nocturnal feats. Specht had gone into a violent fit of rage at the refusal, and had sworn not to sing a note with the others, as long as they refused to do homage to the matchless lady. "If he had only proposed to serenade her in the evening," said Balbus, "we might perhaps have gone to please our dear friend, but he would insist upon its being at four o'clock in the morning, as that was the hour when the riders got up to feed their horses; that was too bad, and meanwhile the lady eloped with the clown."

"That is not true," cried out Specht, "the clown carried her off by violence."

"At all events he has done us a service," said Anthony, "as he has rendered the fulfilment of the gentleman's oath an impossibility, and I see no reason why you should renounce any longer the exercise of your musical talents as artists and faithful colleagues. I am told, dear Specht, that you were a little violent? pray apologise for it, as becomes a man of honour, and then I shall propose to found the quartet afresh."

Thereupon Herr Specht arose and said, "According to the advice of my friend, Wohlfart, I apologise to you, but am ready to give you any kind of satisfaction;" having said this he emptied his glass, and shook hands energetically with the basses.

Then they brought their music, and all four made their voices ring from the pumpkin bower.

The reconciliation with Pix had still to be effected; this was the hardest work of all. Specht looked suspiciously at his antagonist the whole evening.

Pix sat hard-heartedly on the bed, and stroked Pluto, who had accompanied him to the party.

Specht poured out a glass for Pix, and placed it on the bed-post; Pix drank it silently. Specht filled it again, and said, in an easy tone, "Well, Pix, how do you like the pumpkin?"

"It is a mad idea," said Pix.

Specht, offended, turned away, and then he looked again, disquieted, at his adversary. After a while, he stretched out his feet with apparent satisfaction, put his hands in his trousers pockets, and said, over his shoulder, "You will grant me, Pix, that people can take different views upon many things without being necessarily enemies."

"That I grant," said Pix.

"Why then," said Specht, springing up, "why then are you my enemy? why do you slight me so? it is hard to live in enmity with a colleague. I will not conceal from you, that I esteem you, but that your conduct displeases me. You have refused to give me satisfaction, and yet you are still angry with me."

"Don't excite yourself," said Pix; "I have not denied you satisfaction, and I am not angry with you."

"Will you declare that before all these gentlemen?" exclaimed Specht, delighted. "Will you drink with me?" and he took up his glass.

"Come," said Pix, in a conciliatory tone, "I have nothing



against you, I only say that the affair of the pumpkin is a crazy fancy."

"Still it is my fancy," said Specht, withdrawing his glass; "I manure it with blood, and, in some weeks, there will be green leaves."

"No," said Pix, "that is passed for ever, to-morrow morning you will perceive that yourself. Now come, drink with me, and there shall be no more talk of the pumpkin again between us."

Specht, disconcerted, drank with him, and then at once became very merry; the weight which had oppressed him so long had been taken off; he sang and shook hands with all his colleagues, and made more bold assertions than ever.

While Anthony descended the stairs with his friends, he saw that Pluto carried something yellow in his mouth, and was gnawing it eagerly. "They are Specht's pumpkins," said Pix, "the dog has taken them for beef and bitten them all off."

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## CHAPTER VI.

ANTHONY stood by the bedside of the sick Bernhard, and looked with heartfelt sympathy on the emaciated form of his friend. His face had grown still more furrowed than before, his skin was transparent as wax, his curly hair hung in disorder about his moist forehead, and his eyes glistened with feverish excitement caused by the unexpected visit. "You have been long abroad; I have been wishing for you every day; now you are returned I shall get better."

"I will come and see you frequently, if talking does not excite you," answered Anthony.

"No," said Bernhard, "I will listen quietly; you shall tell me of your journey."

Anthony began his account. "I have seen during this time what we have often wished to see together, foreign nations, and stormy life. I have also found pleasant friends amongst the foreigners, and yet after all that I have experienced, I have come to the conviction, that there is no greater happiness than to lead an active life at home, amongst one's own countrymen. I saw many things that you would have enjoyed, because they were poetical and touching, but, on the whole, the unpleasant part predominated."

"It was there as it is all over the world," said Bernhard, "wherever a noble feeling moves the heart, and impels men onward, the world throws its mud on it, and the beautiful is destroyed, and all that is great is made ridiculous. It is no better elsewhere than with us."

"That is our old quarrel," said Anthony, cheerfully; "are you not converted yet, you unbeliever?"

Bernhard picked at the blanket with his fingers, and answered, looking down, "Perhaps I am, Wohlfart."

"Indeed," cried Anthony, slyly, "and who has worked this conversion? Is it something that you have experienced? Assuredly it must be."

"Whatever it may have been," said Bernhard, with a smile that

passed over his face like a sunbeam, "I think that with us, too, there is beauty and loveliness, and I believe that with us, too, life can produce grand passions, holy pleasures, and bitter pains; and I believe," he continued, sorrowfully, "that among us, too, persons may be crushed by the weight of a dreadful destiny."

Anthony listened sadly to these words, and observed that the eyes of his friend were raised with a look of inspiration. "It is truly as you say," he answered, at last, "but the most beautiful thing of all, that which gives this life its highest value, is when the power of man's soul rises superior to all that can assail it. I admire a man who can master his passions, and his fate, and who, when he has done wrong, knows always how to retrace his steps."

"But if it be too late, and the power of circumstances too strong for him?"

"I do not believe in the power of circumstances," said Anthony. "I believe that a man, however hardly he may be pressed, can cut his way out, if he will only make an energetic effort; he may have wounds, like a soldier in the combat, but they will become him. And if there is no rescue for him, he can at least fight valiantly, and when he succumbs, all eyes will be turned on him with sympathy; only those who surrender without resistance, when the storm comes down upon them, are swept away by it."

"No prayers can change down into a stone, the poet says," answered Bernhard, as he pulled a feather from his pillow, and let it fly into the air. "I have something to ask you, Wohlfart," he continued, after a pause, "come nearer. Imagine me to be a Christian, and you my confessor, from whom I can have no secrets." He looked uneasily at the door of the adjoining room, and asked, in a whisper, "What do you think of my father's business?"

Anthony started back. Bernhard gazed in anxious suspense upon his friend; "I understand little of these things, aye, perhaps too little. I do not care to know if he is considered rich or poor, but I ask you, as a friend, what do men think of the way in which he gains his money? It is dreadful, and wrong in me, his son, to ask, but something which I cannot resist impels me to do so; be frank with me, Wohlfart." He raised himself in his bed, and putting his arms round Anthony's neck, whispered in his ear, "Is my father thought honest by men of your class?"

Anthony's heart almost ceased to beat from intense sympathy: he dared not say what he thought, and he dared not lie. He was silent for a while: the invalid sank back on his pillow, and a faint groan sounded through the room."

"My dear Bernhard, before I can answer such a question to a son, I must know why he asks it of another. If you only do it to confirm your own opinion of your father's business by mine, I must refuse to give you any answer; for all that I know are only the cold, perhaps unfriendly views of strangers, and such should never be adopted by the son of a commercial man as his own."

"I ask," said Bernhard, solemnly, "because I am in great anxiety for the welfare of others; because your answer may save many from trouble and misery."

"In that case," said Anthony, "I will answer you. I do not know any single dealing of your father's which has been dishonest according

to commercial ideas; I only know that he belongs to that great class, who, in their dealings, do not inquire how much injury may be inflicted upon others by their own gains. Herr Ehrenthal has the reputation of being a prudent and clever man, to whom the good opinion of honourable men is less indifferent than to a hundred others. He will, perhaps, do much that a merchant of high principle would avoid; but he would undoubtedly feel great repugnance at doing what many other unprincipled speculators would venture upon."

Again a trembling sigh came from the lips of the invalid;—a painful silence followed. At length Bernhard raised himself, and spoke so close to Anthony's ear that he felt the hot breath on his cheeks. "I know that you are acquainted with Baron Rothsattel;"—Anthony looked up astonished;—"the young lady herself told me that you were an acquaintance of hers."

"It is as Fraulein Leonora has said," answered Anthony, with difficulty concealing his excitement.

"Do you know anything about my father's connection with the baron?"

"Very little—only what you told me yourself—that Herr Ehrenthal has lent the baron money on his estate. Lately, when I was abroad, I was informed that some danger menaced the baron; I had even occasion to warn him against an intriguer." Bernhard fixed his eyes anxiously upon Anthony's face. Anthony shook his head; "But it was some one," he said, "who is no stranger in your house—your bookkeeper, Itzig."

"He is a rogue!" cried out Bernhard, vehemently, clenching his attenuated hand; "he is a low, base fellow! From the first day that he entered our house I have felt an aversion to him, as to an unclean animal."

"It appears to me," proceeded Anthony, "that Itzig, whom I knew formerly, is working against the baron behind your father's back. The warning which was given me on behalf of the baron was so mysterious that I could make little of it. I could do nothing but communicate it to the baron as I myself had received it."

"This Itzig governs my father," whispered Bernhard; "he is an evil spirit in our family. If my father has acted egoistically towards the baron, it is the fault of this fellow."

Anthony appeared to acquiesce. "I must know on what footing my father and the baron are—I must know what can be done to help the family out of their difficulties. I can help," the invalid continued, and again a faint ray of joy spread over his countenance; "my father loves me—he loves me much. Now, in my weakness, I have found that his heart clings to me. When he comes in the evening to my bed, he strokes my forehead with his hand; and when he sits down opposite to me, where you are sitting, he looks at me sadly for hours together. Wohlfart, after all he is my father!" He clasped his hands together, and concealed his head in his pillow. "You must help me, my friend," he again resumed; "you must tell me what can be done to save the baron. I require this of you. I myself will speak to my father. I tremble to think of the hour when I must speak to him about it; but, after what you have told me, I fear he does not know all; or," he continued, in a low murmur, "he will not tell me all."

"You must not forget," answered Anthony, "that, even with the purest intentions, it is not allowable to meddle with the affairs of others, however good our object may be. I am a stranger to the baron, and my interference would be considered by him, as well as by your father, as impertinent presumption; and, I fear, in this way we shall learn very little. I do not say that the step would be useless, but I think it would be unsafe. It seems more likely that you yourself would be able to influence your father's measures."

"Pray go to the baron," urged Bernhard, earnestly; "and if he continues reserved towards you, ask the young lady. I have seen her," he continued; "I have concealed it from you as a man tries to conceal his dearest secret, but to-day you must know this also. I have been more than once on the Rothsattel property. I know how beautiful she is—how proud her bearing—how noble her figure! When she walked across the lawn she was like the queen of nature—a bright glory seemed to shine round her head—what she looked at seemed to bow before her glance—her teeth were like pearls, and her lips like roses!" He spoke thus softly, and sank back on his pillow with folded hands and sparkling eyes.

"He, too!" said Anthony to himself. "My poor Bernhard, you are wandering!"

Bernhard shook his head. "Since that day, I have known that life is not dim, but dismal. Now, will you speak to the baron and his daughter?"

"I will," said Anthony, rising; "but I repeat to you I shall be doing an extraordinary thing, which may lead to great embarrassments for us both."

"One in my position fears no embarrassments; and you," he continued, casting a scrutinizing glance at Anthony, "you will be all your life what you have described to me to-day—a man who will cut his way through all difficulties, and who, though wounded, will fight with destiny; as for me, Anthony Wohlfart, the storm will sweep me away!"

"You are weak-hearted," cried Anthony, touched; "illness has reduced you. Your courage will return with your health."

"Do you think so?" said the invalid, doubtfully; "I often think so, but sometimes my heart fails me. Yes! I will live, and differently to what I have done hitherto. I will try all I can to become stronger—I will not dream as much as formerly—I will not excite or torment myself in my room—I will endeavour to live as a valiant man who returns every buffet he receives!" Thus he spoke, with a bright flush upon his cheek, and stretched out his hand to his friend.

Anthony bent over him, and then left the room.

In the evening, Ehrenthal came to the bedside of his son, as he always did, after he had closed the office and hidden the key in his bedroom. "What did the doctor say to you to-day, my Bernhard?"

Bernhard had been lying with his face to the wall; now he suddenly turned himself round, and said eagerly, "Father, I have something to say to you. Lock the door, that nobody may disturb us."

Much alarmed, Ehrenthal ran to the two doors, closed and locked them both obediently, and then hastened back to his son's bed.

"What is it that troubles you, my Bernhard?" he asked, pressing his hand over the brow of the invalid. Bernhard drew back his head, and the father's hand fell on the coverlid. "Sit here," said the son, gloomily, "and answer my questions as sincerely as if you were speaking to yourself."

The old man sat down, and said, "Ask, my son; I will answer all your questions."

"You have told me that you have lent much money to Baron Rothsattel, that you will lend him no more, and that the nobleman will not be able to keep his estate."

"It is as I have told you," answered the father, as cautiously as if on trial.

"And what will become of the baron and his family?"

Ehrenthal shrugged his shoulders. "He will be driven from his estate, and when the day arrives that it is sold by the law court, I shall bid for it, to recover my loan. I have a large mortgage on it, which is safe, and a smaller one, which is bad. On account of the bad one, I shall purchase the estate."

"Father," cried out Bernhard, with a sharp voice, "you will take advantage of this man's misfortunes—you will put yourself in his place! Yes! you drove to the baron's estate, and took me with you—perhaps with the thought of availing yourself of the nobleman's embarrassments! It is dreadful—dreadful!" He threw himself back on his pillow, and wrung his hands.

Ehrenthal moved uneasily on his seat. "Don't talk in that way about things which you don't understand! Business is for the day; when I come to you in the evening, you must not trouble yourself about my affairs. I will not have you raise your hands and cry out in that way."

"Father! if you do not wish me to die of shame and sorrow, you will give up your plans."

"Give up!" exclaimed Ehrenthal, provoked; "how can I give up my money?—How can I give up the estate for which I have been working day and night?—How can I give up the greatest affair I have ever engaged in? You are a disobedient child, and make one miserable about nothing! How have I done wrong?—In lending the baron my money? He wished it. What wrong am I doing in buying the property? I preserve my money!"

"Cursed be every thaler you have spent on it! cursed the day when you made this unhappy resolution!" burst out Bernhard, raising his hand threateningly against his father.

"What is that you say?" cried out Ehrenthal, starting up; "what bad thoughts have entered into my son's heart, that he speaks so against his father? What have I done, and for whom have I done it? Not for myself and my old age. Every day I have thought of you, my son—you, who are so different from your father! I shall have only anxieties; but you will walk from the castle to the garden, and again back to the castle; and, when you pass, the bailiff shall doff his hat, and the ploughmen in the farm-yard shall take off theirs, and they shall say to themselves, 'That is young Herr Ehrenthal, who is our master!'"

"Yes," cried out Bernhard, bitterly, "that is your love—you will make me an accomplice in an unrighteous action! You are mistaken,

father; never will I walk from the castle into the garden with my book! I will rather gain my bread as a beggar than set foot on an estate which has been gained by sin!"

"Bernhard," said the old man, wringing his hands, "you are casting stones on your father's heart, and I feel the weight bowing me down to the earth."

"And you would corrupt your son!" rejoined Bernhard, his eyes flashing with indignation. "For whom, then, have you been bartering and lying? As sure as there is a heaven above us, you shall never say that it has been for your unhappy son!"

"My son, do not break my heart with your curses! Since you were a little boy, carrying your prayer-book to school, I have looked with pride upon you; I have let you do what you liked; I have bought you books, and given you more money than you required. Whenever I could read a wish in your eyes, I have fulfilled it for you; when I have been plagued with business, I have thought, 'My son shall smile, whatever anxieties I may have!'" He took the corner of his dressing-gown and passed it over his eyes, trying in vain to recover his composure. Thus he sat opposite to his son—a broken-down man!

Bernhard looked silently on the bowed-down figure; at length he put out his hand. "My father!" he said, softly. Ehrenthal seized the offered hand quickly, and held it firmly between his, as if to prevent its being taken from him, and, drawing nearer, he kissed and patted it. "Now you are again my good son," he said, with emotion; "you will never again speak so abusively to me, nor quarrel with me about the baron?"

Bernhard hastily withdrew his hand.

"I will not press upon him—I will treat him with consideration about the interest," continued the father, imploringly, and trying to get hold of the son's hand again.

"Oh, it is idle talking with him," said Bernhard, in deep pain; "he does not understand me!"

"I will understand all, if you will only give me your hand again."

"Will you give up your plans about the estate?"

"Do not speak of the estate."

"It is all in vain!" muttered Bernhard, turning away, and hiding his face with his hands.

Ehrenthal sat by the invalid completely crushed, and sighed deeply. "Listen to me, my son," he said at last, in a whisper; "I will try to get him another estate, which he can maintain with his own means. Did you hear, my son Bernhard?"

"Go," said Bernhard, not harshly, but with an expression of deep sorrow; "go now, and leave me alone."

Ehrenthal rose and left the room with drooping head. In the next room he paced to and fro, and wrung his hands, and talked to himself. He opened the door again gently, stepped up to Bernhard's bed, and asked piteously, "Will you not give me your hand, my son?" Bernhard turned away, and did not stir.

It was with beating heart that Anthony gave his name to the baron's servant. "Wohlfart!" exclaimed the baron, slowly, and the recollection of Anthony's letter flashed painfully across him. "Show

him in." He answered Anthony's deep bow with a cold salute. "I owe you thanks for your letter, and beg you will excuse my not having answered it, as your kind intention deserved, in consequence of the pressure of business."

"If I am now come for the same object," commenced Anthony, "I hope you will not think me obtrusive. I am commissioned by a friend who feels the deepest interest in you and your family. It is the son of Herr Ehrenthal; he is prevented by illness from calling on you, but he begs of you, through me, to make use of his influence over his father, should you think it would be useful to you. In that case, he hopes you will impart your wishes to me."

The baron listened with surprise; at the very moment when all had abandoned him, when he had given himself up for lost, strangers came to his help—Itzig, Wohlfart, and the son of Ehrenthal. What Wohlfart offered sounded strange, but it might be an assistance to him in what was perpetually preying upon his mind—a help against Ehrenthal's demands, against the fearful danger that threatened his good name. "I know the young man very little," he said, controlling himself; "I beg of you to explain to me first how it happens that he is so kindly disposed towards me."

Anthony answered warmly, "Bernhard Ehrenthal has a noble heart, and his life is pure; he has grown up amongst his books, and knows little of his father's affairs; but he has an impression that his father has been led by wicked advisers to act hastily towards you; he has great influence with him; his delicate sense of honour is wounded, and he wishes to deter his father from proceedings which he considers dishonourable."

Here was help! It was a pure breath of air penetrating into the suffocating atmosphere of a sick room; but this fresh air made the sick man feel uneasy. It galled him that these honourable people should be so ready to condemn what appeared to them dishonourable; and while he perceived the value of this uncertain prospect of assistance, he felt in his heart a disinclination to owe his deliverance to the conscientious feelings of these two. To Wohlfart, at least, who he had heard was everything that was trustworthy and upright, he did not wish to communicate any details, so he answered, with a kindness that did not come from the heart, "My relations with the father of your friend are such as to make the well-intentioned mediation of a third person very desirable for the interest of both. Whether young Ehrenthal is a person fit for this task, I cannot decide. At all events, tell him that I am thankful for the interest he takes in my affairs, and that I shall profit by it, and consult with him in due time." After this answer, Anthony rose, the baron accompanied him to the door, and, strange to say, made him a low bow.

It was not an accident that, at the moment Anthony passed through the anteroom, Leonora entered also. "Herr Wohlfart!" she called out, joyfully, and hastened up to him. "Dear Fraulein!" he exclaimed; and they greeted one another as old friends.

They quickly forgot the years that had passed: they were, as in former days, the cavalier and lady of the dancing lessons. Both told each other how much they were changed since then, and whilst they talked, their feelings and words became imperceptibly as youthful as formerly.

"You wear your shirt-collars again upright," said Leonora, reproachfully.

Anthony pulled them down instantly.

"Have you still the capotte you had then? it was lined with red, and you looked charming in it."

"The present one is lined with blue," said Leonora, laughing. "Only think, the little Countess Lara is to be married next week: we were talking about you and the diary lately. Eugene also has written to us about you; how charming that you should have made my brother's acquaintance! Come in, Herr Wohlfart, I must know how you have passed your time since then." She took him into the drawing-room, and begged him to seat himself in an arm-chair. She sat opposite, and looked at him with those smiling eyes, which had formerly made him so happy. A change had come over him, perhaps, indeed, another maiden's head shook its locks in the room of the yellow cat; but when he saw the mistress of his younger years, the wild, frank girl sitting in front of him, a distinguished-looking lady, all the feelings of the past were revived, and he breathed with transport the fragrance of the elegant room in which she lived.

"Now that I see you," said Leonora, "it seems as if the dancing lessons had only been yesterday. It was a happy time for me! Since then I have gone through much," she added, drooping her head. Anthony showed such earnest sympathy for her, that she was obliged to appear more cheerful, and looked at him kindly.

"What did you bring my father?" she asked, in an altered tone.

Anthony told her about Bernhard, his long illness, and his kind wishes for her family, and he did not conceal from her, that she herself had a great share in them, so that Leonora looked down, and played with the corner of her pocket-handkerchief. He told her how anxious he was about the health of his friend. "If you can induce your father to accept the mediation of Bernhard, pray do so. I have a secret fear that there is a conspiracy against him in Ehrenthal's office. Perhaps you can find some means of letting Bernhard or me know how we can be of use to the baron."

Leonora looked anxiously at Anthony, and moved her chair nearer to his. "You are like an old friend to me; to you I can confide what makes me uneasy. My father conceals from my mother and me what torments him, and, alas! he has changed more and more every year. He has spent much money on the factory, and is often in want of more. Every day my mother and I pray to heaven to give us back that peace which we had when I first knew you. As soon as I learn anything you shall know it. I will write to you," said she with decision; "when Eugene comes home on leave he shall call on you."

Anthony left the baron's house excited at having seen his beautiful friend again, and full of the warmest wishes to serve the family. At the house door he met Herr Ehrenthal. With a short salute he hurried past the dangerous man, who called after him, entreating him to visit his son very soon.

Ehrenthal had passed some very sad days; he had never in his life sighed or shaken his head so much as now. In vain his wife Sidonie asked her daughter, "What is the matter with the man, what makes him sigh so much?" In vain Itzig endeavoured to cheer up



his employer's spirits, by alluring views of the future. All the discontent that had accumulated in the breast of the money-lender vented itself on the bookkeeper. "You were the person who advised me to take these steps against the baron," he exclaimed to him, the morning after the scene with Bernhard. "Do you know what you are? You are a Malhonnete."

Itzig looked astonished, and shrugged his shoulders. "If that is all you know of me, tell me the meaning of the word Malhonnete; shall I look for it in the dictionary? Don't talk so foolishly, Ehrenthal." Ehrenthal sighed again, scowled at Veitel, and concealed his face behind the newspaper.

He could not bear for more than two days to see the sorrow of his son, who visibly grew worse, and rejected with short words all the advances of his parent. "I must make a sacrifice," muttered old Ehrenthal to himself. "I must restore sleep to his nights, and put an end to his moanings. I will think of my son, and procure the other domain of Rosmin for the baron, on which he has invested his money; and if not, I will rescue his money without any profit to myself. I shall lose by it a profit which I could make with Lowenberg of a thousand thalers. I think that will touch my Bernhard." He put his hat resolutely on his head, pulled it low over his brows in order to keep down the rebellious thoughts that were still stirring within him, and walked to the house of his debtor.

The baron received the unexpected visit with a feeling of alarm; the entrance of any man of business now took away his breath. Hardly was the warner gone, than the enemy himself came. "Now he will demand the legal cession of the mortgage: now will come that which, sooner or later, must follow." But he was joyfully surprised, when Ehrenthal offered him in a kind manner, and of his own accord, to go to Rosmin for him, and in case of necessity to proceed further and to act as his proxy at the sale of the Polish domain. "I will take a safe man to help me, the Justizrath Walther from Rosmin, in order to prove to you that all is done regularly. You must give me full powers to bid for the estate, in order to raise the price sufficiently to cover the mortgage."

"I know that will be necessary," the baron said, "but for God's sake, Ehrenthal, what will happen if the estate remains on our hands?"

Ehrenthal shrugged his shoulders; "You know I did not persuade you to take the mortgage, indeed, I may say that I dissuaded you, if my memory serves me; if you had followed my advice you probably would not have bought it."

"But it is done," answered the baron, angrily.

"However, I beg you, my lord baron, to bear witness that I was innocent of it."

"That is quite indifferent, now."

"For you it is indifferent, but not for me and my honour as a commercial man."

"What do mean by that?" burst out the baron, in a tone that made Ehrenthal shrink; "do you dare to maintain that something that would be dishonourable for you is indifferent to me?"

"Why do you get angry?" exclaimed the dealer; "I say nothing against your honour, God forbid that I should!"

"You did say so," said the unhappy man.

"How can you so misunderstand an old acquaintance? I desire nothing but your assurance that I am innocent of the purchase of the mortgage."

"For aught I care, yes," said the baron, stamping his foot.

"All right," replied the dealer, satisfied; "and if things go badly, and you are obliged to keep the domain, we will see what can be done. It is a bad time for borrowing money, but I will advance you the caution money and the costs, on a mortgage on the domain."

Then he discussed the making out of the full powers, and the details of his journey in the neighbouring province. When he left the baron, the latter became the sport of contradictory feelings.

Was he lost, or was he rescued? A tormenting anxiety came over him: he felt that this mortgage would decide his fate. He thought of going himself, and leaving nothing to Ehrenthal; but again it occurred to him that he must show the greatest confidence in that man, that he himself might not be mistrusted. Thus he floated helplessly in a sea of dangers, the waves heaved high and dashed against him.

In the evening, Ehrenthal entered the sick-room of his son, and laid the full powers on his bed.

"Can you give me your hand now?" he asked his son, who was looking gloomily before him. "I am going to travel for the baron to buy him a new estate; we have settled everything together; here is the full power which he has made out for me: I shall advance him money besides, and if he chooses, he may become a man of consideration again."

Bernhard looked with troubled eyes on his father and shook his head. "That is not enough, my poor father," he said.

"Yet I am reconciled with the baron, and he has acknowledged that I had no share in this misfortune; is that enough for you, my son?"

"No," said the invalid; "so long as you tolerate that wicked fellow Itzig in your office there will be no peace to my life."

"He shall leave," exclaimed Ehrenthal, readily. "If my son Bernhard desires it, he shall leave the next quarter."

"And you will give up the idea of buying the baron's estate for yourself?" continued Bernhard, turning to his father.

"When it comes to a sale, I will think of your words," answered the father, evasively; "and now don't talk any more of the estate. When you are again in good health, my son, we will talk over the matter." So saying, he seized the hand which Bernhard still hesitated to give him, held it fast in his, and sat by him silently.

If ever he was contented in his life, it was now, after bargaining for this reconciliation with his son.

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## CHAPTER VII.

ONE wave after the other dashed over the head of the drowning man. The factory had been at work for several months. The crops of beetroot on the estate had failed, the produce of the neighbourhood, on which the baron counted, proved insufficient. Many of the small proprietors had not fulfilled their contracts, others had furnished bad

roots; the beetroot failed, money failed, the factory stood still, and the workmen dispersed.

Ehrenthal had gone to the Polish province, the baron trembled with the fever of expectation. He ordered post-horses with the intention of following his agent, he counter-ordered them again, for he dreaded the day of the sale—the bidding and bargaining, and the agony till the close of the protocol; and though he mistrusted the dealer, he could rely entirely upon the attorney at Rosmin. At last the gloomy day came when Ehrenthal arrived with the letter from Walther: the only way to save the baron's money was for Ehrenthal to buy the domain for him. The owners of the first mortgage of a hundred thousand thalers had bidden up to a hundred and four thousand; no other purchaser had appeared. "The domain is now yours, my lord baron," concluded the dealer. "To enable you to maintain the estates, I have negotiated with the owners of the first mortgage; they will leave you the hundred thousand on the domain. I have paid the four thousand for you, and the law costs." The baron did not speak. His head dropped heavily on the writing-table; the dealer reported how he had taken possession of the domain for the baron. At the door he muttered, "He is done for. Next quarter he loses his old estate, and he has no energy to keep up the new one; at last I shall be obliged to buy that also."

The time approached when the baron had to pay the interest of all the money he had borrowed. He drove about and tried to raise some: it was all in vain. At last he came to George Werner, who had taken possession of his mother's estate, and who had for some years courted Leonora, and had then cautiously withdrawn. He received him with some embarrassment; the baron's difficulties were no longer a secret. The young man expressed his sympathy, as is usual in such cases; he lamented that the baron had so large a mortgage on the newly bought estate. "Who did you send to the sale?" he asked.

"Hersch Ehrenthal," answered the baron, with some constraint.

The neighbour now became eloquent. "I fear," he cried, "that that man has looked ill after your interest. I know that usurer; years ago he swindled us out of a large sum. My father had cut down a wood on his estate in the upper part of the province, and had delivered the timber to a wood-merchant. Ehrenthal made a swindling transaction with this man; he bought the wood from him for a trifle; the man escaped to America, and the two rogues divided my father's money between them."

The cheeks of the baron became pale. He rose, did not allude to his request again, and quitted his neighbour's threshold like a criminal.

From that day he sat in his chair brooding gloomily; he did not leave his house except for a few minutes; he was rough to his wife, and inaccessible to his daughter, and the ladies suffered unspeakably.

One hope still remained—the mediation of Bernhard: this time he was right, in that way rescue was possible. But he did not take the hand that had been so generously extended to him; he did not send for Anthony, but for another, of whom he was in awe when he did not see him, but whose ridiculous manners made him feel at ease when present. Once more, in this last hour, a merciful providence

left him a free decision upon his future. But alas! he was no longer free, it was the curse of a bad deed that confounded his judgment.

Again Itzig stood before him: the baron looked askance at the bent figure: "Young Ehrenthal has offered to accommodate my difference with his father."

Veitel started as if struck by a shot. "Bernhard!" he exclaimed, vehemently.

"That is his name, I think; he is said to be ill."

"He will die," answered Veitel.

"When?" asked the baron, engrossed by his own thoughts; but he corrected himself directly. "What is the matter with him?"

"It is here," said Veitel, pointing to his chest; "it works like a pair of bellows: as soon as there is a hole the wind will fail."

The baron put on a pitying face, but he only thought that he must make haste. "The invalid is said to have much influence with his father, and there is hope that he may arrange matters with Ehrenthal."

"What does Bernhard know of business? he is a fool!" exclaimed Veitel, unable any longer to conceal his anger; "if one were to put an old piece of parchment covered with book letters before him, he would give up any mortgage for it."

"I see this way does not please you," said the baron, helplessly.

Itzig stood long reflecting before he answered: his eyes wandered unsteadily from the baron to all the corners of the room. At length he answered, with sudden good-humour, "My lord baron, you are right; it will be best for you and Ehrenthal to go to the bed of the sick Bernhard and settle your affairs together there." Again he was silent for awhile, and his face flushed with excitement. "Will you allow me to let you know the day and hour when it will be best for you to speak to Bernhard Ehrenthal? When you have entered the office, I will run up quick to Bernhard and tell him that you are come; meanwhile, be so kind as to wait in the office, even for half an hour, till I return; wait there, whatever Ehrenthal may say. When I fetch you up-stairs all will be right, for Bernhard can do with his father whatever he pleases."

"I will wait for your intimation," concluded the baron, pained at the prospect of the terrible day.

Itzig left the baron, and hurried with wild excitement to his den in Pinkus' house: he rushed up and down his small room, and clenched his fists against Bernhard. He opened the old desk, and took two keys from a secret drawer, which he laid on the table. At length he put them into his pocket, and darted down-stairs into the common room. There, Herr Hippus, Veitel's clever friend, was cowering in a corner of the balcony. Hippus had, from the pressure of circumstances during the last few years, been prevented from becoming more dignified, younger, or more honest; on the contrary, he looked more shabby and broken-down than usual. He was at that moment squatting in a corner, on which the warm rays of the sunshine fell, reading an obscene novel; and when Veitel entered with hurried steps, he sank his head lower over his book, and seemed to be too much interested in it to notice the young man of business,

"Shut your book and listen to me," cried Veitel, impatiently.

"Rothsattel will get back his bonds from Ehrenthal; he will give me the mortgage, and I shall be obliged to procure the remaining eight thousand."

"Faith, this is a pretty business," answered the old man, rocking his ugly head; "what does not one live to see! When Ehrenthal throws away his money on a scamp who has broken his word to him, it is time that we should become pious and go to confession. Before we talk further, fetch me something good to eat and drink; I am thirsty, and cannot speak another word."

Veitel hastened down to fetch what he demanded. The old man looked after him, and muttered, "Now for it," and stared vacantly on his book, shaking his head.

When Veitel had placed the desired meal before the lawyer, he asked, shortly, "How much?"

"Three hundred," said the old man; "and, moreover, I must consider it well first. It is not in my line, sweet Itzig; in my own vocation my services are to be had for less, as you have found; but for an honourable work in the style of Herr Cartouche, and suchlike people, I require better payment. I am only an amateur, and I cannot say that I have any love for such affairs."

"Have I, do you think?" exclaimed Itzig. "If there is a way to avoid this, tell me. If you know how the baron and Ehrenthal can be kept asunder, and can be brought to ruin each other, say so. Ehrenthal's own son will make peace between the two; he will stand between them, as the naked urchin with wings stands in the print between the two lovers, and we shall be cheated."

"We!" said the old man, pleasantly; "you will be cheated, you jackass; what have I to do with your affairs?"

"Two hundred," said Veitel, drawing nearer.

"Three," answered the old man, emptying his glass; "but I will not do it alone, you must be present."

"If I am to be present, I can do it myself, and do not require your help. I will contrive that the house shall be empty, that Ehrenthal and the baron shall leave the office together. I will give you a sign if the papers are on the table or in the chest. It will be dark, and you will have half an hour. I will lock the house door, and open the door into the back lane, which is generally bolted. It is so safe, that a child of ten years old might do the business."

"Safe enough for you," snarled out the old man, "but not for me."

"We have tried to find out what can be done by means of the law, and it will not help us, so we must go against the law." He struck his fist upon the balustrade, and gnashed his teeth; "and if you won't do it, still it shall be done, though I know that the suspicion will fall upon me if I am not in Bernhard's room the whole time."

"That's right, my jolly Itzig," said the old man, pushing his spectacles on, in order more closely to watch the passionate resolution of the other. "As you are so valiant, I will not leave you in the lurch; but remember the three hundred."

The bargain was concluded. They both squatted down in a corner of the balcony, and whispered together till it was dark.

Some days after, Anthony was sitting in the twilight by the bed of the sick Bernhard; "I come only in a hurry to see how you are."

"Weak," answered Bernhard, "always weak; I have pain in breathing. If I could only get into the open air out of this dark room."

"Would not the physician allow you to take a drive? If the sun shines warm, I will call for you in a carriage to-morrow."

"Yes," exclaimed Bernhard, "you may come, and then I will tell you something. He looked cautiously round. "I received to-day a note by the post without a signature." He drew a small note from beneath his pillow, and gave it with a mysterious air to his friend; "take it; perhaps you may know the hand."

Anthony went to the window and read: "Baron Rothsattel wishes to speak to you this evening: take care that you are alone with him and your father."

When Anthony gave back the letter, Bernhard looked at it with reverence, and placed it again under his pillow: "Do you know the hand?" he asked.

"No," answered Anthony, "it seems a feigned character: it is not the hand of the Fraulein."

"Whoever the writer is," continued Bernhard, depressed, "I hope a good result from it this evening. Wohlfart, this quarrel lies like a weight upon my breast, it takes away my breath; I feel its pressure like a heavy burthen; to-day I shall be freed from it."

Talking seemed an effort to him. Short sentences only fell from his lips. "I will see you again to-morrow," said Anthony. As he rose, the soft steps of ladies sounded in the room; the mother and Rosalie came to the bedside of the invalid, and greeted the visitor.

"How are you, Bernhard?" the mother asked; "you will be alone with your father this evening. There is a great music-meeting at the academy, at which Rosalie is to play on the pianoforte. We had the piano placed in the back room, Herr Wohlfart, that she might not disturb Bernhard by her practising."

"Sit down by me for a minute, mother," said Bernhard. "I have not seen you for a long time in your smart clothes. You look very handsome to-day. You wore such a dress as that when I was a boy, and had the scarlet fever. When I dream about you, I always see you in the yellow dress. Give me your hand, mother, and when you hear the music think of your Bernhard. I will make soft music here."

The mother sat down by him. "He has fever again," she said to Anthony, who assented by a sign.

"To-morrow I shall go out into the sun," cried out Bernhard, excited; that will be a pleasure to me."

"The carriage is waiting," remarked Rosalie. "We must pass through the back part of the house with our dresses, where it is so dirty, as Itzig has persuaded my father that the noise of the carriage driving up to the front door will disturb Bernhard."

"Good night, Bernhard," said the mother, putting out her plump hand to him once more. The ladies hastened out of the room, and Anthony followed them.

"What do you think of Bernhard's state?" asked the mother, on the stairs.

"I think him very ill," answered Anthony.

"I have told my husband already that when the summer comes I will go with Rosalie to the baths, and we will take Bernhard with us."

Anthony left the house with a heavy heart.

All was quiet in the house; nothing was heard in Ehrenthal's rooms but the heavy breathing of the patient; only, beneath him something scratched on the floor, as if a mouse was gnawing the wood. Bernhard listened impatiently. "How long will it gnaw—till it has made itself an opening—and then it will come into my room." A shiver came over him, and he turned uneasily on his couch. The darkness weighed upon him, the air was close. He rang till the servant brought him a lamp. He then looked wearily about him; the room looked old and mysterious; it appeared to him like a strange room, and as if he himself was a visitor in it. He looked with indifference on his library, and the drawers in which his dear manuscripts lay. The shining spot on the floor, the crevice in the door, through which every evening the light glimmered from the neighbouring room, would all be left, in the morning, to go with Anthony out of that narrow chamber. He thought whether they might not go along the road by which the Fraulein came from, and returned to the estate. Perhaps he would meet her. His eyes beamed—he felt sure he would meet her. She would be sitting proudly in her carriage, her veil floating about her blooming face, her white arm would be raised, and she would nod a greeting to his carriage; yes, she would recognize him. She would know that he had done good service to her father; perhaps she would stop her carriage, and ask him how he was; and so he would talk to her, and hear the sweet sounds of her voice. Once more she would nod to him, and the carriages would separate, and go in different directions. And where would he go?—"Into the sun!" he whispered. And he again listened anxiously to the gnawing of the mouse.

A hurried step crossed the hall. Bernhard rose, and the blood rushed into his face—it was Leonora's father who was coming to him! The door opened gently, and a hideous figure slipped in, and looked shyly about the room. Bernhard cried frightened, "What do you want here?"

Itzig darted up to his bed, and said with a hurried tone, and with a voice that sounded as hollow as that of the invalid, "The baron has just gone into the office, and has told me to come to you and persuade you to support the request he makes to your father."

"He has told you!" exclaimed Bernhard. "How could the baron give a man like you a commission."

"Be silent," answered Veitel, roughly; "there is no time now for chattering. Listen to my words. The baron has promised your father security for twenty thousand thalers, and he cannot give this security, because he has sold this same document to another. He has broken his word of honour, and requires your father to give up his good security. If you can persuade your father to give up twenty thousand thalers, do so."

Bernhard trembled so that his hand shook. "You are a liar!" he cried out, "every word that comes from your mouth is falsehood, hypocrisy, and fraud."

"Hold your tongue!" repeated Veitel, with feverish anxiety. "You ought not to injure your father. The baron cannot be helped. He is like a fly who has burnt his wings in the flame—he can only crawl; and if Ehrenthal is fool enough to follow your stupid advice,

which you give because you can understand nothing, still he cannot persevere the estate to the baron. If he does not smash him, another will. I get no advantage by telling you this," he continued, listening uneasily to a noise outside the house; "I only do it from regard to your family."

Bernhard gasped for air. "Leave this room," he burst out at last; "there is nothing but fraud and lying in this world."

"I will bring the baron and Ehrenthal up," said Veitel; and he rushed out of the room.

Ehrenthal's angry voice was sounding through the hall: "I shall go to the law courts; I shall denounce you and your intrigues." Veitel dashed the door open. The baron was sitting in a leathern chair, his face buried in his hands: Ehrenthal stood before him threatening and trembling with rage: on the desk stood the baron's casket with the fatal bonds and mortgage. Veitel called into the room—"Stop, Ehrenthal! your Bernhard is very ill; he is lying up-stairs alone, and calls for you and the baron; he will have both of you by his bed."

"What is this?" roared out Ehrenthal. "Are you plotting behind my back even with my son?"

"Have you shown him the new mortgage that you have had registered for him?" asked Veitel of the baron, hastily.

"He would not even look at it," answered the baron, gloomily.

"Give it to me," said Veitel; and he placed a new document on the table before Ehrenthal.

"You would give me a scrap of paper for my money, a rag which is not worth burning."

"Don't waste your time," cried Veitel, with an anxious voice; "there is no one up-stairs with Bernhard, and he is calling for you and the baron; he will do himself some mischief. Make haste, and go up-stairs; he has been moaning, and desired me to send you immediately."

"Good God!" exclaimed Ehrenthal, and seized his hat. "What is the matter? I cannot go now to my son. I am anxious about my money."

"He will scream himself to death!" cried Veitel. "You have time enough afterwards to talk about your money. Make haste."

The baron and Ehrenthal left the office; Itzig followed.

Ehrenthal closed the door, put up the iron bar, and fastened the padlock. They hastened up-stairs—Veitel last. A piece of money sounded on the stairs. Ehrenthal looked round. "It has fallen from my pocket," said Veitel.

The baron and Ehrenthal entered the invalid's room, Itzig sneaked behind them, and glided along by the wall as far as the window, behind Bernhard's head, that he might not see him. The baron placed himself at the head of the bed, Ehrenthal at the foot; a faint light fell from the lamp on those who had come to the dying man's side to haggle about money and securities. The nobleman began with civil speeches; he remembered Bernhard's former visits, and expressed a hope of soon seeing him again on his estate, but his eye fell with alarm on the attenuated countenance, and a voice within him whispered that he had no time to lose. Bernhard sat upright in his bed, his head bending over his chest; he raised his hand, and



interrupted the baron's speeches : " Pray, my lord baron, tell me what you wish my father to do? and remember, I am no man of business."

The baron explained; Ehrenthal tried often to interrupt him, but Bernhard made a movement with his hand, upon which the old man stopped, and contented himself with shaking his head violently and muttering to himself.

When the baron had ended, Bernhard beckoned to his father. " Come nearer, and listen quietly to my words." The father put his ear close to his son's lips. " What I tell you," said Bernhard, in a whisper, " is my firm determination, and I made up my mind before this day. When you earned money, your idea was that I should outlive you, and be your heir after your death, was it not?" Ehrenthal nodded energetically. " If you see in me your heir," continued Bernhard, " attend to my words. If you love me, act as I tell you. I renounce my inheritance while we both live; what you have accumulated for me you have accumulated in vain; I ask nothing for my future. If it is ordained that I shall recover I will make my way by my own work; I will learn to rely on myself. Your love and your blessing is all I ask from you. Remember that!"

Ehrenthal raised his arms, and exclaimed, " What language is this, my Bernhard, my poor son! you are ill, you are very ill."

" Listen to me, father," implored Bernhard. " What right have you to this nobleman's estate? You have been in connection with him for years; you must not be the cause of misfortune to his family. I do not ask you to give away a large sum that would fall heavily upon you, and would humble this gentleman, but I call upon you to accept the security he offers you. If in former days he promised something else, forget it; and if you have papers in your hand that alarm him, return them."

" He is ill," the father groaned; " very ill."

" I know that it will give you pain, my father. Since you left your grandfather's house as a poor Hebrew boy, barefooted, with one thaler in your pocket, since then you have thought of nothing but earning money. No one has taught you differently. Your creed has shut you out from intercourse with those who know better what gives life its value. I know it will make your heart ache to risk such a sum, but you will do it—you will do it, for love of me."

Ehrenthal wrung his hands, and said, with tears streaming from his eyes, " You don't know what you ask, my son! What you ask is a theft from your father."

The son took his father's hand. " You have always loved me. You have wished that I should be different from you. You have listened to me, and before I could express a wish you have realized it. What I now ask of you is the first important request I ever made you, and this request I will repeat in your ear as long as I live: it is the first, my father, and it will be the last."

" You are a silly child!" cried out the father, almost beside himself. " You ask my life—you ask my whole business."

" Fetch the papers," answered Bernhard. " I will see with my own eyes that you return them to the baron, and receive from him what it is still in his power to give you."

Ehrenthal took out his handkerchief, and wept aloud. " He is ill; I shall lose him, and I shall lose my money, too!" Meanwhile

the baron had been sitting silently, with his eyes cast down. At the window, Itzig was clenching his fist convulsively, and, without being aware of it, he tore the curtains from the pole.

The son looked fixedly at the emotions of his father, and at last exclaimed, with great effort, "It is my will, father; go and get the papers." Then he sank back upon his pillow. The father would have thrown himself upon him, but Bernhard waved him back with a gesture of displeasure, and, gasping, with difficulty said, "It is enough; you give me pain."

Ehrenthal started up, seized his office candle, and tottered out of the room. All was quiet there, only the anxious breathing of those who remained. The baron was still sitting downcast, but this reprieve excited in his breast a feeling almost like joy. He beheld a spot in the sky where the sun broke through the dark clouds; he was saved; his word of honour was returned to him, and eight thousand thalers from the man in the window was in prospect. Now he could look up and might raise his head again. He laid hold of the hand of the invalid, pressed it, and whispered to him, "I thank you, sir! oh, how much I thank you! you have rescued me, you have saved my family from despair and myself from shame."

Bernhard kept firm hold of the baron's hand, and a happy smile passed over his face. Meanwhile, he who was at the window trembled with suspense, his teeth chattered, and he pressed his body firmly against the wall, to control the fever that shook him.

This quiet continued for some time; no one spoke: Ehrenthal did not return. Suddenly the door was flung open, and a man in a raving fury, with contorted face and dishevelled hair, rushed into the room. It was Ehrenthal. He held the flickering light in his hand, but nothing else.

"Gone!" he shrieked out, clasping his hands together, so that the light fell to the ground. "All are gone! all are stolen!" He flung himself upon his son's bed and stretched out his arms towards the invalid, as if imploring for help. The baron sprang up not less staggered than Ehrenthal. "What has been stolen?" he exclaimed.

"All are gone!" groaned out Ehrenthal, looking only at his son; "the bonds are gone, the mortgages are gone. I have been robbed," he shrieked out, starting up from the bed, "theft! burglary! send for the police!" and again he rushed out of the room and the baron after him.

Stunned and half fainting, Bernhard looked after them. Then he who had remained behind stepped from the window to the bed. The invalid turned his face towards him, and stared at the man like the weary bird at the hawk. It was a demon's face into which he looked: the red hair was bristling bolt upright: infernal fury and villany sat on his hideous features. Bernhard closed his eyes and held his hand before them, but the face came nearer to him, and a hoarse voice whispered in his ear.

Meanwhile, two men stood face to face in the office, looking at one another with vacant eyes. The casket with its contents had disappeared, all that the baron had put on the desk had disappeared. Ehrenthal had opened the door with his key as usual, the lock was uninjured, everything in the office was in its place. If in the open cash-box anything was missing, it was a mere trifle. On the well-barred

shutters there was no trace of violence; it was inconceivable how the documents had been taken.

Both the men ran into the hall, examined everywhere, behind the staircase, behind an old chest, in the entrance to the cellar, nothing was to be found anywhere. Even the house-door was locked; they remembered what the cautious book-keeper had done before they went up. Again they went back to the office, and searched every corner, always more hurriedly and more anxiously: then they sat down opposite each other, with bloodless cheeks, in an agony that increased every minute, each mistrusting the other, each scowling on the other with hostile looks, endeavouring to discover any sign that might betray a bad conscience; again they both started up and overwhelmed each other with such reproaches as despair suggested to them; and while they raised their hands against each other like savages, they both felt that one had lost as much as the other, and that it would be wise to moderate their tongues, lest a stranger should witness the scene.

The papers had vanished from Ehrenthal's office at the very moment when he had yielded reluctantly to his son's entreaties. He had scarcely consented, he had gone alone to fetch the papers, who would believe that they were stolen? Would his own son believe him?

To the baron everything depended on those papers: his loss was the greatest. Just when he had indulged in the hope of rescue, he sank into an abyss, the depth of which the eye of the falling one could not yet fathom: the bonds were in the hands of strangers. If the thief knew how to make use of them, if even the theft was brought before a law-court, he was a lost man. And if they were not recovered, he was hopelessly ruined. Years must pass before the courts would register the mortgages afresh, and his fate must be decided in a few weeks. He was not in a position to satisfy the hostile Ehrenthal, he was not in a position to meet his other debts. Now he was unredeemably lost. Before him lay poverty, ruin, and disgrace. Again he thought of that court of honour, of his fellow-officers, and that unhappy young man who had killed himself. The baron had then been summoned to look at the corpse. He knew how a man looked who died that way, and now he knew how a man could be driven to such a death. Formerly he had shuddered when he thought of the appearance of the dead man, now he felt no such horror. His lips moved, and as if dreaming, he said to himself these words of comfort: "That is the only help."

Thus they sat opposite each other brooding, and the longer they sat the more distorted became their countenances and their judgment.

The light flickered and the door was flung open: slowly they both turned their faces to see who entered. A hideous head appeared at the door, and a wild call was heard: "Go up, Hirsch Ehrenthal, your son is dying." The apparition vanished. Ehrenthal rushed with a loud cry to the door: the baron staggered out of the house a broken-down man.

When the father flung himself down by the bed of his son, a white hand was raised up threateningly, and then a corpse fell back. Bernhard had gone to the sun.

The evening was warm, slight vapoury clouds veiled the stars in

the sky, but a pleasant twilight still lighted the earth. From the blooming shrubs of the public gardens, the wind carried fragrantcy into the streets of the town. The pleasure-seekers walked slowly home to their houses; they regretted leaving the balmy air to shut themselves up within their walls. The beggar stretched himself comfortably on the threshold of the stone palace; every apprentice who had a sweetheart hastened to meet her, that he might walk with her about the streets; it was an evening when every one who was weary forgot the labours of the day, the sorrow-stricken his cares, and the unsocial man sought his fellow-creatures. People stood before the doors chattering and laughing, the children played in the street, they chased one another in the twilight, and danced on the granite slabs of the pavement. This night the nightingale in its cage sang its sweetest song, it sang that the lovely early summer was come, the happy time, when life becomes light, and hope unfolds its blossoms.

Among the crowd of walkers was seen the tall figure of a man, moving heavily along with his head drooping on his chest. His horses stamped impatiently, awaiting the return of their master, to carry him from the throng of workmen into the aristocratic quarter of the town. They waited in vain till far into the night; he whom they served had forgotten them. He heard nothing of the song of the nightingale, and passed through the circle of dancing children without hearing one sound of their cheerful voices. His head was confused, and the current of his thoughts was sluggish. Thus he went from the town to the gardens; he ascended slowly a hill covered with flowers and seated himself wearily on a bank. Under his feet the dark river was rolling towards the sea, in front of him rose the imposing outline of the old cathedral, the river before him was covered with rafts, coming from the high lands and going down to the sea. The huts of the rowers were on the rafts, and beside them blazed small fires at which they cook their suppers. Through the still air the loud laugh or rough cry of the ferryman came up to him. The flowing water, the bold outlines of the towers, the dim veil of clouds above, all appeared to him through a mist, only one thought flashed through his gloomy mind, like the fiery points on the river beneath him. He also had done business with rafts, and the money he had gained by it had been called by others sin money. It was as much the property of others as the money the highwayman appropriates. He rose quickly and hurried down the hill.

He rushed to and fro along an avenue of high plane-trees, and again he stopped exhausted, and leant his back against the stem of a tree. Before him rose the chimneys of the quarter where the industry of the town had located itself, a row of gigantic obelisks rose high above the roofs of the abodes of men. He knew what it was to build such a column to the clouds; he also had thrown everything that had hitherto surrounded and sheltered him, his energy, his money, and his honour, into the foundations of such an edifice. He had paid for the frenzy of such a monument with sleepless nights and grey hairs; it was the sepulchral column of his race that he had erected on his estate; and what he saw before him in the dim light of the night appeared to be an immense burial-ground, that contained many shadowy monuments, under which the peace of happy human hearts lay

buried. He nodded his head, and said, so that he heard the words himself: "That is the end." He rose and returned to his house.

On the way, he felt how pleasant it was to think of objects which relieved him from such hideous phantoms. He entered his house, and his face brightened when he saw the light of the hall lamp.

When he stood in the entrance-hall he heard a voice in the baroness's room: it was Leonora reading; he listened, and perceived it was a novel; he would not frighten the ladies, there was a remote back room in the house, next to an uninhabited one, to that he would go. As he was standing thus, the door opened, and the baroness looked out; involuntarily she started back as she saw him at the door. He smiled and stepped gaily into the room, shook hands with his wife, patted Leonora's head, and stooped down to see what she was reading. The baroness complained that she had been obliged to take her tea without him, and he joked about her impatience for her favourite drink. Whilst saying this, he thought, an hour more or less makes no difference. He went to the cage where two small birds from a foreign land were sleeping on their perch, nestling with their little heads close to one another; he put his fingers between the brass wires as if to pat them, and said, carelessly, "They are gone to their rest." Then he took the candle from the hand of the servant, and walked to the door of his own room. When he took hold of the handle, he remarked that his wife's eyes were directed anxiously towards him; he turned round once more and nodded kindly to her. He then closed the door; he took a polished case out of his writing-desk, and carried it to the back room; there he was safe, no one would disturb him.

Slowly he loaded. Whilst doing so he looked at the inlaid work on the butt-end; it was the toilsome labour of some poor devil of a gunmaker; his friends had often admired it: the pistols were a present from the general, who at his wedding had given away his wife, who was an orphan. He hastily pushed in the ramrod, then he looked behind him, for he did not wish to fall on the ground. He would not frighten those who entered; they should not have the same horrible impression that was made upon him by the sight of his comrade on the floor.

He put the barrel to his temple; but at that instant the shriek of a woman was heard, his wife rushed into the room, his arm was grasped with the strength of despair; he shrank—his finger touched the trigger—a flash and a report, and he sank back upon the sofa, and groaning, put his hand to his eyes.

In the dealer's house: from the room where the dead man was lying, the father descended the staircase to the office; anxiously he examined the desk, the cupboard, and all the corners of the room, sat down, shook his head, and wondered; then he locked his office, went again up-stairs, sat down by the bed groaning and screaming. Thus he passed the whole night lamenting and searching—a distracted, decrepit, crushed man.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

IN the merchant's house life had resumed its smooth course; the small whirlpool occasioned by the return of Anthony had gradually

subsided. The unheard-of precious articles from the nutwood cupboard had given place to other numbers, which were likewise excellent, but more comprehensible to the aunt. She had been right in prophesying that Anthony would not notice this victory of common sense over passionate gratitude. Only one change continued, the greatest and most glorious; the inhabitant of the lower house kept his privileged place in the heart of his young mistress; and his fine figure often appeared among the images Sabine assembled around her, when at her work-basket or in her treasury.

To-day Sabine was pacing disquietedly to and fro in her room before dinner. The aunt, who always knew everything, had just told her that a maid from Ehrental's had rushed into the office to announce Bernhard's death to his friend. How would he bear the news? thought Sabine. And the name of Ehrental reminded her of the past—of another who now lived far away, and of the hour when the wavering of her heart had been settled by a letter from the house of the deceased. And Anthony knew of the feelings she had conquered. Oh! how often had she become aware of that knowledge by the sympathy of his looks and the forbearance of his words! How full of consideration had been his conduct to her! how chivalrous the quiet help he had given her in conversation! Had he an idea of the gallant victory she had won over her youthful folly? She shook her head. "No; he knows nothing of it: he still sees in me the girl who succumbed to the weakness of a childish inclination." She stopped at her flower-table. "At this place chance betrayed to him what I then felt; and the past still comes like a cloud between us. Everywhere I feel the shadow of the departed by my side—in the evening, when I am sitting by Wohlfart, when he greets and talks to me. His tone and manner always say, 'She is not alone; he is by her.' A slight tremor came over her, and she passed her hand gently over the gay foliage, in order to drive away the thoughts which tormented her. She could not tell him that she was free from the long-concealed sorrow; but, on that day, when he had lost a friend who was so dear to him, she could show him that there were other hearts that clung to him; and again she paced to and fro, thinking of how she could find a way of seeing him alone.

The servant announced dinner. Anthony came with the other gentlemen, and went straight to his place. There was no opportunity of speaking to him before dinner; but he gave her a look so full of sorrow, that she could not help showing him sympathy.

"He does not eat to-day," whispered the aunt to her. "Not ever the roast," she added, reproachfully.

Sabine became anxious and disquieted. Now, she thought, the gentlemen will get up from their chairs; he will go with them; and I shall not see him again all day. Herr Jordan had already risen, so she called to Anthony, across the table, "My great Calla is in bloom; you admired the bud the other day; stop a minute, I should like to show it to you." Anthony bowed, and remained. There were some more painful minutes: then the brother rose also. She hastened to Anthony, and conducted him to the flower-table.

"You have received painful news to-day," she began, gently.

"The message did not surprise me," answered Anthony, with emotion. "The physician gave no hope; but he is a great loss to me."

"I never saw him," said Sabine. "It is only from you I know that his life was lonely, and poor in joy and love."

She pushed her chair nearer to Anthony, and made him tell her about his friend. She listened with warm sympathy to every word, and tenderly questioned and comforted him.

It was a relief to Anthony to speak of his friend; and he was eloquent in describing his quiet industry, his learning, and his enthusiastic feelings.

After a pause Sabine looked cordially at him, and asked, "Have you any news of Herr von Fink?"

It was the first time she had uttered the name to Anthony. He felt the touching confidence which led her in this hour to speak of the beloved of her heart.

In his emotion he seized her hand which lay on the table before him. Slowly she withdrew her hand, and cast down her eyes; it was only for a moment: she then looked at him again kindly.

"He is not happy in his new life," said Anthony, gravely. "His last letter was written in a bitter spirit; and from that, more than from his words, I conclude there are many things different from what he expected. The business into which he has been thrown does not please him."

"Is it dishonourable?" continued Sabine, quickly.

"At least, not what would be called honourable in this house," replied Anthony. "Fink's mind is too noble, and he has lived too long near your brother for him to find any satisfaction in the wild speculations which are only too common there. His commercial friends are, for the most part, men without conscience: and his soul revolts at such a partnership."

"And can he endure such a connection, even for a day?" asked Sabine.

"It is a singular fate," answered Anthony; "that he, who generally insists so absolutely on having his own will with others, he, who is so little inclined to bend to any outward constraint, should, in his present position, be obliged to work with bound hands. The whole mechanism of these speculations is so firmly organized in America, that a single partner can do little to alter it. And now that his wishes are realized, great capital and many square miles of land at his disposal, he is more unsettled than ever. He was always disposed to depreciate other men: and it frightens me to see the bitter contempt with which he speaks of his own life. His last letter portrays a most insupportable state of things, and makes one fear some violent resolution."

"There is only one resolution for him," said Sabine. "May I ask you what answer you gave him?"

"I have urged him to extricate himself from these affairs at once, and upon any conditions. His earnest will, will find a way out, if that which I have proposed is impossible. I have begged him, either to realise his former plan of becoming a regular landed proprietor, or to come back to us."

"I knew that you would write in that way," said Sabine, drawing a deep breath. "Yes, he must come back, Wohlfart; but not to us," she added, softly.

Anthony remained silent.

"And do you think that Herr von Fink will take your advice?"

"I do not know," replied Anthony, slowly. "My advice was very anti-American."

"But it was the right advice for you to give," said Sabine, with joyful pride.

"An officer wishes to speak with Herr Wohlfart," said a servant, entering. Anthony sprang up. Sabine went to her flowers, and bent sorrowfully over the green leaves. The shadow of the other was still hovering between them.

The hurried words of the servant filled Anthony with a vague anxiety. He hastened into the ante-room. Eugene von Rothsattel stood there.

Anthony was rushing up to him with a warm greeting; but when he perceived his disturbed countenance, he drew back, frightened.

Eugene whispered nervously, as if with a bad conscience, "My mother wishes to speak to you; something dreadful has happened in our house."

Anthony seized his hat, rushed into the office, begged Bauman to excuse him to the Principal; and then, accompanied the lieutenant to the baron's house.

Eugene walked, in a state of agitation, by Anthony's side; he had lost all composure. What he said was incoherent, and hardly intelligible to Anthony.

"My father wounded himself accidentally, with a pistol, yesterday evening—an express summoned me from the garrison—when I arrived I found my mother in a fainting fit, which lasted more than an hour. My sister and I do not know what to do. Leonora begged my mother, on her knees, to send for you. You are the only person in whom we can confide in our distress. I do not understand business; but my father's affairs must be in a very bad state. My mother is quite beside herself; everything in the house is in the greatest confusion."

From what he said, and from what he tried to conceal, from his abrupt words, and from his anxious looks, Anthony surmised, in part, the dreadful scenes of the last evening. In the baroness's apartment he met Leonora. Weeping and exhausted, she staggered towards him. "Dear Wohlfart," she cried, taking his hand. She began to sob afresh, and her head sunk powerless on his shoulder.

Meanwhile, Eugene walked to and fro in the room, wringing his hands, and at last sat down on the corner of a sofa, and wept bitterly.

"It is horrible, Herr Wohlfart," said Leonora, raising herself. "Nobody is allowed to go near my father, neither Eugene nor I: my mother, alone, and old John are with him. This morning Herr Ehrenthal was here; he insisted on seeing my father: he abused my mother, and accused my father of being a cheat, so that my mother fell insensible on the floor. When I rushed into the room, the dreadful man went away, and shook his fist at us."

Anthony led Leonora to a chair, and waited till she had recovered herself. It was impossible to comfort them; their misery affected his heart deeply.

"Call our mother, Eugene," Leonora said at last. The brother, hurried out. "Do not abandon us," she said, imploringly, wringing her hands; "we are come to extremities: even your help cannot avert misfortune from us."



"He is dead who might have done so," answered Anthony, sorrowfully. "I do not know if I can be of any use to you; but I hope you will not doubt my wish to be so."

"Certainly not," said Leonora. "Eugene also thought immediately of you."

The baroness entered. She walked with difficulty up to Anthony, and supported herself with her hand on a chair: but she kept her self-command as she greeted him.

"We are in a position in which we have need of a friend who understands more of business than any of us three. An unlucky accident will prevent the baron, probably for a long time, from attending to his affairs: and, little as I know about them, I can see that immediate action is necessary for our interests. My children have named you to me. I ask much from you, in begging you to sacrifice your time for our sakes." She sat down, made a sign to Anthony to take a seat; and said to her children, "Leave me; I shall have less difficulty in explaining to Herr Wohlfart the little I know if I do not see your grief."

When they were alone, she beckoned to Anthony to come near her, and tried to speak; but her lip quivered, and she covered her face with her handkerchief.

Anthony was moved at seeing the struggle it cost her to make the necessary disclosures.

"Before I can allow you, honoured lady, to grant me so great a confidence, I feel obliged to ask you, for your own sake, whether the baron has not some relation, or intimate friend, to whom you could more easily make this delicate communication? I beg you to consider that my experience is not great, and that my position is not such as to make me a suitable adviser for the baron."

"I know no one," said the baroness, looking down disconsolately. "I can more easily tell you, what must not be concealed, than any of the friends of our family. Look upon yourself as a physician who is summoned to an invalid. The baron has, this morning, made me some communications as to the state of his affairs."

She then proceeded to tell him, what she had been able to make out concerning her husband's embarrassments, of the danger which threatened the family estate, and of the money that was necessary to take possession of the Polish domain. The information she was able to give was incomplete, but it was sufficient to fill Anthony with solicitude for the future prospects of the family.

"My husband has given me the key of his writing-desk; he thinks that Eugene could talk of our affairs with an experienced person more calmly than himself; I beg you to undertake this task. Whenever you require information I will endeavour to get it from the baron. The question now is, whether you are inclined to take this trouble for us, who are strangers to you."

"I am most willing," answered Anthony, seriously, "and I hope to obtain the necessary time, through the kindness of my employer, unless you should consider it more suitable to put the business into the hands of the baron's experienced lawyer."

"There may probably be occasion later to take that gentleman's advice," said the baroness, evasively.

Anthony rose. "When do you wish us to begin?"

"Immediately," answered the lady. "I fear there is not a day to be lost. I will assist you in looking over the papers." She took Anthony into the next room, called Eugene, and put the key into the baron's desk. When the drawer was opened, she for a moment lost her self-command, and the words slipped out of her lips: "The legacy of a dead man!" She tottered to the window, and the motion of the curtain betrayed the struggle that shook her frame.

The sad work began. Hour after hour elapsed: Eugene could not bear the inspection, but the mother handed to Anthony the letters and documents she thought useful; and though she was often obliged to stop, she went through with it. Anthony put the papers in order, and endeavoured, by a cursory glance, to obtain at least a superficial knowledge of their contents.

It had become dark, when the old servant, terrified, opened the door and called out into the room, "He is here again." The baroness gave a suppressed scream and made a gesture that he was not to be admitted.

"I have told him that there is no one at home, but he will not be sent away; he is making a noise on the stairs, and I cannot manage him."

"It will kill me if I hear him again," murmured the baroness.

"If it is Ehrenthal," said Anthony, rising, "I will endeavour to send him away. The most urgent part of the business is done; have the kindness to keep these papers, and allow me to return again to-morrow."

The baroness made a sign of assent, and sank back in her chair. Anthony took his hat and hastened into the ante-room, where he heard, even in the distance, the loud voice of Ehrenthal.

He was startled at the appearance of the dealer. His hat hung at the back of his head, his pale face was swollen, as if by drink, his glaring eyes bloodshot. Ehrenthal stood before him, and called in broken sentences for the baron, grumbling and cursing. "He shall come," he shrieked out, "he shall come at once, the wicked man. He pretends to be a nobleman; he is a scoundrel, against whom I will bring the police. Where is my money? Where is my mortgage? I will have my security from this man, who says he is not at home."

Anthony went close up to him and said, with a firm voice, "Do you know me, Herr Ehrenthal?"

Ehrenthal raised his glazed eyes: gradually he recognized the friend of his deceased son. "He loved you," he exclaimed, piteously; "he talked to you more than he did to his own father. You have been the only friend he had on earth. Have you heard what has happened at Ehrenthal's?" he added in a whisper. "Whilst they stole the papers, he died. He died, with his hand raised, in such a way!" He clenched his fist, and struck his forehead. "Ah! my son, my son, why did you not forgive your father?"

"Let us go to your son," said Anthony, taking the arm of the dealer.

Ehrenthal made no resistance, and allowed himself to be led down stairs, and to his own house.

From thence Anthony hastened to the house of Justizrath Horn and had a long conversation with him.

He came home in the evening violently excited; his heart was

pierced with sorrow for those, whose apparently assured happiness had for so many years occupied his imagination. The confidence with which they had treated him in their misfortunes filled him with pride. He was burning with desire to help them, and hoped that his faithful endeavours would find some way of rescue; but he did not as yet see it. When he saw the large building of the Firm before him, the windows of the ground-floor barred, vaults and cellars closed with iron doors, so firm and safe, in the dead of the night, it occurred to him—if any man can help, it will be the Principal. His sharp sight would penetrate into all the dark secrets by which the baron had been victimized; his strong energy would make the rogues, who had got hold of the baron, yield; he had a noble heart; he could find the right path without difficulty. Anthony looked up to the first floor; the whole front was dark, with the exception of the corner room, in which a light still burnt: it was the Principal's study.

Anthony took his resolution quickly, sought for the servant, and was shown in to Herr Schroeter, who looked surprised at the entrance of Anthony.

"What is the matter, Wohlfart? Has anything happened?"

"I come to ask for your counsel and for your assistance," exclaimed Anthony.

"For yourself, or for others?" asked the merchant.

"For a family with whom I have accidentally been connected; they will be ruined if a strong and friendly hand does not avert the mischiefs."

Anthony then related hurriedly what had passed that afternoon; in his emotion he seized the hand of the merchant, and exclaimed, "What I have seen is heartrending; have compassion on the unhappy ladies and help them."

"Help them!" answered the merchant, sternly; "how can I do so? Have you any commission to ask help from me, or is it only your own warm feelings which induce you to make this demand?"

"I have no commission," said Anthony; "it is only the interest I take in the baron's fate that brings me to you."

"And what right have you to make this communication to me, which of course has been given to yourself by the baroness in the strictest confidence?" inquired the Principal, coldly.

"I commit no indiscretion by telling you, what in a few days will be no secret to strangers."

"You are still in a state of great excitement, otherwise you would not have forgotten, that, under any circumstances, a merchant, the first correspondent of my office, ought not to make any such communication, except with the express permission of the parties interested. You may be sure that I shall not make use of what you have told me; but it was not business-like, Wohlfart, to be so open with me."

Anthony was struck dumb. He thought that the Principal was right, but it appeared to him hard, that at such a moment he should blame his confidence. The merchant walked silently up and down the room; at last he stopped in front of Anthony. "I do not inquire how you come to take so warm an interest in this family: I fear it is an acquaintance that you have to thank Fink for."

"You shall know all," interrupted Anthony.

"Not yet," answered the Principal, stopping him; "I will only

repeat to you now, that there is no possibility of my interfering in other people's concerns, without a direct invitation on their part. I must add, that I do not wish for such an invitation; I will not conceal from you, that even in that case, I should probably decline to do anything for Baron Rothsattel."

Anthony's feelings burst forth: "It is a question of saving an honourable man and amiable ladies, out of the hands of swindlers, who have ensnared them. This appears to me the duty of every man, and I especially hold it to be a sacred obligation, from which I cannot escape; but without your support I can do nothing."

"Well, and how do you think that the encumbered proprietor can be helped?" asked the merchant, sitting down.

With somewhat more composure, Anthony answered, "First, an experienced man of business like you, might try to penetrate into these intrigues. There must be some point where the rogues can be caught; your knowledge and sagacity would discover it."

"Any attorney possesses these qualifications better than I do; and the baron will, without difficulty, find clever and honest lawyers. If the baron's antagonists have laid themselves open to law, the sharp eye of an attorney will discover it best."

"Unhappily the baron's lawyer gives little hope."

"Then, dear Wohlfart, it will be difficult for others to do anything. Show me a man, who in trouble has energy enough to avail himself of the hand that is offered to him, and say to me, 'Help him!' as your friend, and bound in gratitude to you, I would not refuse my hand to the sinking man; I am sure you are convinced of that."

"I am," answered Anthony, dejectedly.

"But, after all, this does not seem to be the case with the baron. As far as I can judge of his situation, from what you have told me, and what is said in the town, he fell into the hands of usurers, only because he wanted, what alone gives value to life, a sober judgment and steady energy."

Anthony assented, with a sigh.

"Helping such a man," continued the merchant, sternly, "is a thankless task, which anyone who has common sense has a right to object to. One ought not to abandon the hope of any man's amendment, but the want of energy is exactly what is the most difficult to improve. Our power of assistance to others is limited; and before we sacrifice our time for a weak man, we must see whether we are not depriving ourselves of the power of helping a better one."

Anthony exclaimed, impatiently, "Does he not deserve some consideration? He has been brought up in a condition of life in which he has not learnt, like us, to rise by his own exertions."

The merchant laid his hand upon the shoulder of the young man. "It is precisely for that reason, believe me, that there is no power of helping the greater part of these gentlemen, who suffer for their family traditions. I am the last to deny how large a number of talented men there are in this class; and whenever distinguished talent or noble character appears among them, it develops itself admirably in their sheltered position; but it is not favourable for inferior men. Those who from childhood lay claim to a life of enjoyment, and assume a privileged position, on account of the merits of

their ancestors, will seldom have the requisite energy to deserve it. Many of our ancient families are doomed to decay, and it will be no misfortune to the country when they cease to exist. Their family traditions make them proud without reason, limit their intellectual horizon, and confuse their judgment."

"Even if that is true," exclaimed Anthony, "it ought not to withhold us from helping an individual, as our fellow-creature, where our sympathy is excited."

"Certainly not," said the Principal, "where it is excited; but in age it does not light up so quickly as in youth. The baron is said to have been working, to isolate his property from the great flood of capital and industry, that he might entail it on his family for ever. For ever! You, as a merchant, know what such attempts are worth. Every reasonable man must wish to put a stop to this aristocratic chaffering with landed property in our country. Though every one must think it advantageous for the same land to pass from father to son, because in this way the productive power of the field is increased from a feeling of affection, and by a regular plan. We prize a piece of furniture used by our forefathers, and Sabine will be proud to open to you any room in the house with the keys which her great-grandmother carried about. In the same way, it is natural that a wish should exist in the heart of the agriculturist to preserve the piece of nature that surrounds him—the source of his wealth and prosperity—for those he loves. But for that purpose there is only one way, and that is, to qualify himself for the maintenance and improvement of his inheritance. Where this power ceases in families, or in individuals, property will also fall away—the money will pass to others, and the plough to hands which can manage it better. The family which becomes weak from a life of enjoyment, must sink in social life, in order to make room for the rising powers of others. I consider every one who seeks to fix lasting privileges on himself and his offspring, at the cost of the free action of others, as an enemy of the sound development of our state; and when such a man is ruined by these endeavours, I may regard him with pity, but I must say that he deserves his fate, as he has sinned against a great principle of life; and I should consider any assistance given to such a man, a double wrong, because it would be for the support of an unsound family."

Anthony cast his eyes down sorrowfully; he had expected sympathy, and that his wishes would be warmly entered into; and he found in this man, of whom he had so high an opinion, a coolness that he despaired of overcoming. "I cannot contradict you," he said at last, "but in this case, I cannot agree with your views. I have seen the terrible grief of the family of the baron, and my whole soul is filled with sorrow and sympathy, and with the wish to do something for those who have opened their hearts to me. After what you have told me, I do not venture any more to ask you to trouble yourself about these concerns; but I have promised to assist the baroness, as far as my limited powers and your kindness will allow, in arranging her affairs. I request you to give me leave to do it. I will endeavour to work regularly in my office hours; but if, in the next few weeks, I should sometimes miss an hour, I hope you will excuse me."

Again the merchant walked to and fro, without speaking. At length he stopped before Anthony, and looked with deep earnestness

at his excited face, and there was somewhat of sorrow in his countenance when he forced himself to reply: "Remember, Wohlfart, that every occupation which agitates our mind, easily obtains a power over us, that may disturb, as well as improve, our life. For this reason I find it difficult to grant your wish."

"I have for some weeks felt a foreboding of this," said Anthony, softly; "now I cannot act otherwise."

"Well, do what you think right," concluded the merchant, gloomily, "I will place no hindrance in your way; and I hope that after some weeks you may view the whole matter with greater calmness."

Anthony left the room with more composure. The merchant gazed long, with a frown on his brow, on the spot where his clerk had been standing.

But Anthony's mind had not become quieter. The cool, displeased reception of his request wounded him deeply. "So bitter—so hard!" he burst out, when he sat down exhausted in his room. In a corner of his mind lurked a suspicion, that, after all, his employer had more egotism, and less heart, than he had given him credit for. Many allusions made by Fink recurred to his memory; and that evening also, when young Rothsattel, with boyish impertinence, had ruffled the merchant—was it possible that he had not forgotten those rude words? he asked himself, doubtfully. The frowning brow of the merchant disappeared behind the beautiful figures of the stately ladies. "I am not doing wrong, whatever he may say; I am right, even with respect to him. My lot will be, henceforth, to seek an independent way for myself." Thus he sat for a long time in darkness, and his thoughts were as dark as the room. He went to the window, and looked down into the gloomy court. Suddenly he perceived, by the faint light that glimmered through the clouds, a gigantic white cup, suspended, like a ghost, in the air. Astonished, he laid hold of it, and, on striking a light, he beheld the splendid flower of the Calla, from Sabine's flower-table. Sabine had secretly placed it in his room—now it hung its head, sadly, from the broken stalk. This little mishap appeared to him like a bad omen. He broke off the flower, laid it before him on the table, and for a long time sat silently gazing on its crushed petals.

Sabine, with a candle in her hand, entered her brother's room. "Good night, Traugott!" she said, nodding to him. "Wohlfart was with you this evening—he left you late."

"He will leave us!" answered the merchant, gloomily. Sabine started—the candlestick fell clattering on the table. "For God's sake! what has happened?—Has Herr Wohlfart told you that he will leave us?"

"He does not know it himself, yet; but I see it coming, step by step, and not I, and still less you, can detain him. When he stood before me here, and, with glowing cheeks and trembling voice, begged me to help a ruined man, I saw what it was that is driving him away."

"I don't understand you," said Sabine, gazing at her brother.

"He chooses to become the confidant of a ruined nobleman—the eyes of a girl estrange him from us. It appears to him to be a worthy object of his ambition to become the agent of the Rothsattels. In

the office they call him Fink's heir. This connection with the aristocratic landowner is Fink's legacy."

"And have you refused your help?" asked Sabine, gently.

"Let the dead bury their dead," said the merchant, roughly, and turned to his writing-table.

Sabine went away silently; the candle trembled in her hand as she passed through the long suite of rooms. She listened anxiously to her own footsteps, and a shuddering came over her; she felt as if a strange figure glided invisibly by her side. It was the revenge of the other! The shadow of the past which had fallen on her innocent life, had frightened her friend from her presence! Anthony's longing heart clung to another—she who had loved and rejected the absent one, had remained a stranger to him, and now, as with a widow's veil, looked back on the extinguished passion of her youth.

During the subsequent weeks, Anthony was incessantly employed, as he tried hard to perform all his duties in the office. The evenings, and every spare hour, were passed in writing, or in conferences with the lawyer or with the baroness. Meanwhile, the baron's fate took its course. At the last term, he had not paid the interest of the money for which he had encumbered the family property. A whole series of mortgages were foreclosed in one day, and the estate was sequestered by the *landschaft*. Complicated lawsuits ensued. Ehrental went to law, and demanded the first mortgage of twenty thousand thalers, and to have it drawn afresh; and he was also inclined to claim the last one, which the baron had offered to him in that fatal hour, but Loebel Pinkus equally claimed the first mortgage, and maintained that he had paid up the twenty thousand thalers. Ehrental had no proofs, and his suit was conducted irregularly, for he was whole weeks in an unfit state to mind his affairs. Pinkus, on the contrary, fought with all the artifices that a hardened sinner can make use of, and the contract which the baron had made with him was drawn up with such admirable skill that the baron's lawyer had little hope from the beginning. In short, we may add that Pinkus gained his cause, and the mortgage was adjudged to him, and newly registered. Anthony had by degrees obtained some insight into the baron's affairs; but the double sale of the first mortgage the baron carefully concealed from his wife. He called Ehrental's claims underground, and expressed a suspicion that Ehrental himself had committed the theft, till at last he really began to think so. Thus Itzig's name was never mentioned to Anthony, and the suspicion against Ehrental, which was shared by the lawyer, prevented him from coming to any explanation with the money-lender.

Between Anthony and Herr Schroeter, a coolness had arisen, which was noticed by the whole office with surprise. The merchant looked gloomily at Anthony's empty place, when he happened to be absent in the hours of work, and seemed indifferent to the increasing pallor of his clerk's face, from anxiety and night-work. As formerly with Fink's irregularities, he now seemed to take no notice of Anthony's new occupation. Even towards his sister he observed an obstinate silence, and parried Sabine's attempts to turn the conversation upon Wohlfart. Anthony's heart revolted against this coolness. After his return, treated like a child of the house—exalted, cherished, and

fondled—and now treated like a paid workman, who does not deserve the bread that is flung to him—a plaything of unaccountable whims! He certainly had not deserved this; so he became reserved with the family, and silent at his desk. But in the evening, in the solitude of his chamber, the difference between the past and the present, cut him so to the heart that he started up vehemently and stamped on the ground.

Only one comfort remained to him—Sabine was not angry with him. He saw her indeed but little, and she also was silent at table, and avoided speaking to Anthony; but he knew that she thought him right. A few days after the conversation with the merchant, Anthony was standing alone by the great scales, whilst the servants were busy with a waggon before the door. Sabine came down the stairs; she passed so close to him that her dress touched him. Anthony stepped back, and made a formal bow. “To me you must not become a stranger, Wohlfart!” she said gently, looking at him imploringly. It was but a moment—a short greeting—but in the faces of both there shone a joyful peace.

The time approached at which Herr Jordan was to leave the house. The Principal called Anthony once more into his private office. Without severity, though without a trace of the cordiality which he had formerly shown him, he began: “I have informed you of my intention of putting you in Jordan’s place, and giving you the agency. During the last few weeks your time has been occupied by other business—more than I should approve of for the person who is to act as my representative. Therefore I ask you, whether, from the present time, you are able to undertake Jordan’s charge?”

“No,” answered Anthony.

“Can you name me any time—not too remote—at which you will be free from your present work? In that case, I would try to make an arrangement for that period.”

Anthony answered, sorrowfully: “I cannot yet tell when I shall again be master of my own time. I am aware that I already require your indulgence for many irregularities; I therefore beg of you, Herr Schroeter, not to count upon me for replacing Herr Jordan.”

A frown came over the merchant’s brow, and, without speaking, he bowed to Anthony.

When Anthony shut the door of the room behind him, he felt that this moment had completed the rupture between him and the merchant. He sat down in his place, and leant his burning face upon his hand. Immediately afterwards, Bauman was summoned to the Principal. He was appointed to Jordan’s place. When he came back to the front office, he went up to Anthony, and whispered, “I refused to take the place, but Herr Schroeter insisted upon it. I feel that I am wronging you.” In the evening, Herr Bauman, in his room, read the chapter out of the first book of Samuel about the wrathful king Saul (the Principal), and of the friendship between Jonathan and the persecuted David—and his heart was comforted by it.

On the following day Anthony entered the baroness’s room; Leonora and her mother were sitting at a large table, amidst dressing boxes and cases of every form, trunks strongly clamped with iron, stood at the baroness’s feet. The curtains were closed, the subdued rays of the sun filled the richly-adorned room with a faint light!



garlands of evergreens were lying on the carpet, and the table-clock was ticking merrily in its alabaster case. Under a blooming myrtle sat two love birds in a plated cage: they chirped incessantly to one another, and when one fluttered down to the next perch, its companion plaintively cried, till it returned: and then they sat again comfortably nestling to each other. The delicate children of a warm sky, whose life is never chilled by cold storms, glittered in green and gold, thus bright was the room, and filled with fragrance. "How long will this last?" thought Anthony. The baroness rose. "We have to trouble you again, we are at work which gives us much pain."

The table was covered with ladies' ornaments, gold chains, diamonds, rings, and necklaces, were heaped together in confusion. "We have chosen what we can do without," said the baroness, "and beg of you to charge yourself with the sale of these things. I have been assured that some of them are of considerable value, and as money is wanted above all things at present, we hope to find in these an assistance which will diminish the anxieties of our friends."

Anthony looked in astonishment on the shining heap. "Speak, Wohlfart!" cried Leonora, anxiously, "is it necessary, can it be of any use? Mamma insists on our selling all our jewels and plate that we do not want for daily use. What I can give myself is not worth speaking of, but my mother's jewels are valuable, and there are many presents of her younger days, remembrances with which she cannot bear to part, unless it is necessary."

"I fear it will be necessary," answered Anthony, seriously.

Leonora sprung up. "Poor mother!" she exclaimed, and she threw her arms around the baroness.

"Take them," said the mother, gently to Anthony; "I shall be happier when I know that we have done all in our power."

"But is it advisable to give up everything?" asked Anthony; "many things that you prize would have little value for the jeweller."

"I shall never wear jewels again," said the baroness, coldly; "take them all—all!" She held her hand before her eyes and turned away.

"This tortures my mother!" exclaimed Leonora, vehemently; "put them all up, and take them out of the house as soon as possible."

"I cannot receive these trinkets," said Anthony, "without taking some measures that will diminish my responsibility. First of all, I must, in your presence, make a list of them."

"What useless cruelty!" cried Leonora.

"I shall not be long." Anthony tore some leaves out of his pocket-book, and made an exact inventory.

"You must not see it, mother; I will not suffer it." Leonora led her mother out of the room, then sat down by Anthony, and watched how he packed them all up, numbered them, and placed them in the trunk.

"This preparation for the market is terrible. My mother's whole life will be sold, for to every piece is attached some tender recollection. Look here, Wohlfart, these diamonds were given her by the princess when she married my father."

"They are splendid diamonds," exclaimed Anthony, in admiration.

"This ring comes from my grandfather, and these are presents

from my poor father. Ah ! no man understands how dear these trinkets are to us ; it was a fete-day always for me when mamma wore these diamonds. Now we come to my own treasures ; they are not worth much ; do you know if this bracelet is good gold ? ”

“ I do not know. ”

“ However, we will put it with the rest, ” said Leonora, taking it from her arm and laying it on the table. “ You are a good man, Wohlfart, ” she continued, looking at him with moistened eyes ; “ do not abandon us. My brother has no experience, and is more helpless than we are. It is a fearful situation for me. In mamma’s presence I try to compose myself, but I could weep and cry all day long. ” She sank in a chair and took fast hold of his hand ; “ dear Wohlfart, do not abandon us, ”

Anthony bent over her, and regarded with lively emotion the beautiful girl who looked up so confidently through her tears. “ I promise to assist you as much as I can, ” he said, in great excitement ; “ I will be near you whenever you want me. You have too good an opinion of my knowledge and powers, I cannot do as much for you as you expect. But what I can do, I will, in every way and manner. ”

Their hands separated with a hearty shake ; the contract was made.

The baroness came back into the room. “ Our lawyer was with me this morning, and now I wish for your advice also. He has informed me that there is no hope of preserving the family estate for the baron. ”

“ There is none, in the present state of things, when money is so dear, and so difficult to obtain. ”

“ And you are also of opinion that we must give up everything to save the Polish domain ? ”

“ Yes, ” answered Anthony.

“ We shall want money for that too. Perhaps I shall be able to put a small sum at your disposal, through some of my relations : though small, it may be enough to cover the first expenses. I wish these jewels not to be sold here, and in order to obtain the sum that I count upon, a journey to the court will be necessary. Our lawyer has spoken with great praise of your judgment. At his wish I have determined to make you a proposal. Are you willing to devote all your time to us for a few years, at least, till our greatest difficulties are overcome ? I have consulted with my children, and both of them agree with me that our only hope of rescue is in you : the baron also unites in our views. I do not know whether your position will allow you to grant us your lasting assistance, but upon whatever conditions you do it, we shall be thankful to you, and if you know any way in which we can express our great obligations to you, by forwarding your views, let me know. ”

Anthony was struck dumb. What the baroness demanded of him was separation from the Firm, the Principal, and Sabine. Had the same thought occurred to him before, when he stood before Leonora, or bent over the baron’s letters ? At all events, now that the words were spoken, it gave him a shock. He looked at Leonora, who folded her hands imploringly. “ I have ties, ” he answered, at length, “ which I cannot break without the consent of others ; I was not prepared for this proposal, and I beg you to leave me time to reflect ; it is a step that will decide my future lot. ”

"I will not urge you," said the baroness, "I am only a supplicant; whatever your decision may be, our grateful thanks will always be yours. If it should not be in your power to support our weakness, I fear we shall find no one. Pray think of that."

With burning cheeks Anthony hastened through the streets; the beseeching look of the baroness, and Leonora's imploring gestures, allured him out of the gloomy office into greater liberty, and an adventurous future, from the darkness of which some gay visions rose before his eyes. A request had been made him with great feeling, and he was strongly tempted to accede to it. An unwearied disinterested assistant was necessary to shelter the ladies from the most terrible disasters, and he would be doing a good work, and fulfilling a duty, if he followed his inclinations.

Thus he entered the house of the Firm. Alas! whatever his eyes rested on here stretched out its hand to retain him. He glanced under the dusky archways, and saw the faces of the faithful servants, the chains of the great scales, and above, the blacking pot of honest Pix, and he felt that this was his home. Sabine's dog licked his hand, and followed him to his room. His and Fink's room! Here the childish heart of the orphan boy had found a friend, good comrades, a home, and a fixed honourable object in life. And he looked through the window down into the court, on the corners and projections of the vast building, at the barred window, behind which Herr Liebold was sitting at the ledger: and in the small room where he worked, who, though now angry with him, had for years been a friend and father to him. Then his eyes fell on the windows of Sabine's store-room; he had often looked there for a flitting gleam of that light, which lighted the whole of that large house, and threw a comfortable glow over his room. And rising rapidly, he said to himself, "She shall decide."

Sabine rose in astonishment when Anthony approached her with rapid steps. "I feel irresistibly drawn to you," he cried; "I am to make a decision on my future lot. I feel uncertain, and cannot rely on my own judgment; you have always been a kind friend to me since the first day of my entrance. I have been accustomed to look at, and think of you, in everything that touches my heart in this house. Let me to-day, also, hear from your mouth what you think best for me. Baroness von Rothsattel has proposed that I should enter into an engagement with the baron as his superintendent. Shall I accept it or stay here? I do not know; you must tell me what is right for me and others."

"Not I," said Sabine, drawing back, and her cheeks growing pale. "I cannot venture to decide on it; and indeed you do not wish it, Wohlfart, for you have already decided."

Anthony cast down his eyes.

"You have been thinking of leaving our house, and the thought has become a wish; and I am to approve of it, and praise your resolution. That is what you ask of me. But that I cannot do, Wohlfart, for I grieve at your leaving us."

She turned her back to him, and supported herself on a chair.

"Oh, do not be angry with me, Fraulein, I cannot bear it. I have suffered much during the last few weeks. Herr Schroeter has suddenly withdrawn his kindness from me, which I have long considered

the greatest treasure of my life. I have not deserved his coldness. What I have been doing of late was not wrong, and I did it with his knowledge. I was, perhaps, spoilt by his kindness, and have therefore more deeply felt his displeasure. But if I had a consolation, it was in the thought that you did not condemn me. Don't be so cold to me now, it will make me miserable for ever. I have no human being on earth to whom I can look for affection, and for a solution of my doubts. If I had a sister, I would pour out my soul to her to-day. You do not know what, in my loneliness, your greeting and your kind shake of the hand has been to me. Do not turn away from me so coldly, Fraulein Sabine."

Sabine remained silent for some time. At length, still turning from him, she asked, "What attracts you so to these strangers? Is it a bright hope, or only sympathy? Be severer to yourself than I am to you, when you ask yourself these questions."

"What makes it possible for me to leave this, I know not. If I must give a name to the feeling that actuates me, I would call it gratitude to one individual. She was the first who spoke kindly to me, a wandering boy, travelling alone in the world. I admired her in the calm splendour of her former life. I have often had childish dreams about her. There was a time when a tender feeling for her filled my whole heart, when I believed myself fettered in her image. But years have thrown a fresh colouring over my life; I have seen men and things with other eyes. Then I met her again, anxious, unhappy, and despairing, and my compassion overpowered me. When I am away from her, I feel that she is a stranger to me; and when I am present with her I think of nothing but her bitter sorrow. In that hour when I was obliged to leave her society like a criminal, she hastened after me, and held out her hand to me, before that scornful society. And now she comes to ask for my hand to help her father. Can I refuse it? Is my feeling wrong? I do not know, and no one can tell me—no one but you alone."

Sabine's head was bent over the arm of a chair, but she raised herself quickly, and with tears in her eyes, and a voice full of love and grief, she exclaimed, "Follow the voice that calls you! Go, Wohlfart, go!"

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## CHAPTER IX.

On a cold October day, two men rode through the gate of the town of Rosmin into the plain which lay stretched boundlessly and monotonously before them. Anthony was sitting wrapped up in his fur cloak, his hat slouched over his brows. By his side young Sturm, in his old cavalry cloak, and his soldier's cap set jauntily on his head. In front of them sat a farmer's boy, perched on a truss of straw, whipping his small horses. The wind, with its gigantic brush, swept the sand and broken straw over the stubble fields. They were on a broad field road, without ditches or trees; the horses now waded through muddy ruts, now through deep sand. Wherever a mouse had opened her hole, or an industrious mole had done its best to interrupt the plain by its little hills, yellow sand was seen glittering from amongst the scanty green of the fields. Muddy water filled the hollows of the

ground, and in these places the decayed stems of old willows stretched their stunted branches in the air, their long rods whipped each other, and the withered leaves fluttered down into the stagnant water. Here and there stood dwarfish fir-trees, resting-places for the crows, which, scared by the carriage, flew with loud cries over the heads of the travellers. No house was to be seen on the road, no foot passenger, no vehicle.

Karl looked from time to time at his silent companion, and at length said, pointing to the horses, "How rough their hair is, and how pretty their mouse-coloured coats! I should like to know how many of these little beasts it would take to make one like my sergent's horse? When I took leave of my father, the old man said, 'Perhaps I shall visit you, my little one, at Christmas, when you light the Christmas-tree.' 'You will not be able,' says I. Then the old man cried out, 'Pooh! the coaches are well built; I can trust myself in them.' Now, Herr Anthony, I know my father will never visit us."

"Why not?" asked Anthony.

"It is possible that he may get as far as Rosmin, not in the coach, but by it. For, knowing that he has paid for two places, he will probably jog along by the side of the carriage; but as soon as he sees these horses and this road, he will turn back at once saying, 'What shall I do in a country where the sand runs away from under one's feet like water, and where they harness mice? This land is not firm enough for me.'"

"The horses are not the worst part of this country," answered Anthony, absently; "they run quick enough."

"Yes," returned Karl, "but not like regular horses. They fling their legs about like cats fighting in a bed of parsley; and as to shoes, they have geese's feet, and for these hoofs shoes have not yet been invented."

"If we only get on, it is sufficient," answered Anthony. "The wind blows cold, and I feel chilly, in spite of my fur."

"Herr Superintendent has not had much sleep the last few nights," said Karl, with a military salute. "The air blows as it would through a barn. The earth here is not round, as elsewhere, but flat as a cake. People have laid out a dessert in these parts. We have been travelling more than an hour, and have seen no village."

"A dessert, indeed!" sighed Anthony; "let us hope that it will improve."

Thus they went on in deep silence. After a while the driver stopped near a pool of water, took the horses out, and led them to drink, without paying any attention to the travellers.

"What the deuce is the meaning of this?" exclaimed Karl, springing from the carriage.

"I am going to feed," answered the lad, sulkily, with a foreign accent.

"I am curious to see how he will contrive that," said Karl to Anthony; "there is not a trace of a fodder-bag to be seen."

The horses, however, showed that they knew how to live without oats; they stretched their shaggy necks to the ground, and ate the grass and leaves of the shrubs by the side of the water, and from time to time bent their heads down to the pool, and tasted the muddy drink. Meanwhile the lad took a bag from under his seat, placed

himself under the shadow of an elder bush, and cut some bread and cheese, without even casting a look at his passengers.

"Hulloa! Ignatius or Jacob," exclaimed Karl, giving him a rough push, "how long is this breakfast to last?"

"An hour," answered the lad, munching.

"And how far is it from here to the property?"

"Two hours, perhaps more."

"You will do no good with him," said Anthony. "We must put up with the customs of the road." He descended from the carriage, and walked up to the horses.

Anthony is on his way to the Polish domain. He is now superintendent for the baron. He has passed months of anxiety and sorrow. The separation from the Principal and the Firm was full of bitterness. During the last part of the time, Anthony stood alone amongst his colleagues. Only the quiet Bauman was on his side; the rest considered him as a lost man. The merchant listened with icy coldness to the announcement of his resignation, and even in the hour of departure the hand of the Principal lay like hard metal in his. Since that, Anthony had made several journeys upon the family business to the creditors. He was now on his way, with Karl, whom he had engaged to look after the baron's farm, to put things in order on the new property. Ehrental had, after the auction, on the strength of his full powers, taken possession of the domain. He had engaged the Polish manager. It had been taken over in a very irregular way, and it was known in Rosmin that since then the manager had made many fraudulent sales. So Anthony had no prospect of quiet days.

"Now the hour is come when I must perform my duty," exclaimed Karl, putting his hand into the straw of the carriage. He took out a large case of lacquered tin, and carried it to Anthony. "This Fraulein Sabine gave me for you." Cheerfully he opened the cover, and presented to him all the materials for a good breakfast, a bottle of wine, and a silver cup. Anthony laid hold of the case. "It is very cleverly arranged," said Karl; "Fraulein Sabine did it herself." Anthony examined the case on all sides, and placed it carefully on a soft tuft of grass. Then he took the cup, and saw his initials engraved on it, and underneath the words, "Your health!" This made him forget the breakfast, and all that surrounded him, and he gazed thoughtfully on the little cup.

"Don't forget the breakfast, Herr General Superintendent," said Karl.

"Sit down by me, my faithful friend: eat and drink with me. Leave off your ceremonious jokes. We shall have little, but whatever we gain we will divide like brothers. Take the bottle, if you have no glass."

"Nothing but a leather one," said Karl, drawing out of his pocket a little drinking-cup of brown leather. "What you have just said to me is very kindly intended, and I thank you for it, but there must be subordination, if it is only on account of other people. So the Herr Superintendent will have the goodness to allow me first to shake hands with him, and then to let things remain on the old footing. Look to those horses, Herr Anthony. Good gracious! the rascals eat thistles!"

The horses were put to, again they flung their short legs forward in the sand, and again they advanced through the bleak country; first

through a barren plain, then through a wretched fir wood, and then over a ridge of sand hills, which, like downs desolated by the flood, rose above the scantily vegetated soil, finally across a ruined bridge which spanned a small brook.

"Here is the estate," cried the driver, turning round and pointing with his whip to a heap of dingy straw roofs, which became visible straight before them. Anthony rose from his seat, and looked for the group of trees, in which he supposed the manor-house would lie. He saw nothing of the kind. Nothing was to be seen round the village that would have embellished the most humble cottage of his own home; no orchards behind the barns, no enclosed gardens, no elm-trees on the village-green; bare and uniform the dirty cottages stood by each other.

"This is sad," he sighed, sitting down again; "much worse than they told us in Rosmin."

"The village looks as if it was bewitched," exclaimed Karl. "The teams are not working in the fields, and neither cows nor sheep are to be seen on the stubbles. Probably the people have stall-feeding here."

The driver whipped his horses, and they galloped between two rows of mud huts up to the inn. Karl sprang from the carriage, opened the inn-door, and called to the landlord. A Jew rose slowly from his seat, and came to the door. "Is the gens-d'arme from Rosmin come?" asked Anthony.—He had gone into the village.—"Which is the way to the manor-house?"

The landlord, an elderly man, with an intelligent countenance, described the way in German and Polish, and stood at the door, as Karl maintained, quite out of his wits at the sight of two men. The carriage turned into a bye-road, bordered on both sides with thick stumps of trees, the remains of an avenue which had been cut down. The carriage rattled along a road full of holes, through puddles of mud, and over stones, by the side of clay huts, on which the remains of white plaster were hanging.

"The barns and stables are empty," exclaimed Karl, "for there are holes in the roof large enough for our carriage to drive through."

Anthony said no more, he was prepared for the worst; through a gap between the stables, the travellers drove into the farm-yard, a large irregular space, surrounded on three sides by ruinous buildings, and on the fourth open to the fields. There lay a heap of rubbish, clay and rotten beans, the remains of a fallen barn; the yard was empty, nothing to be seen in the shape of implements or any human industry. "Where is the house of the inspector?" asked Anthony, dismayed. The driver looked round with searching looks, and at last espied a small one-storied building with a thatched roof and dingy windows.

The noise of the carriage brought a man to the door, who waited phlegmatically till the travellers descended and stood before him. He was a broad-shouldered fellow, with a swollen brandy face, dressed in a jacket of rough cloth; behind him was a dog as rough and shaggy as himself, with its nose out of the door snarling at the strangers. "Are you the inspector of these estates?" asked Anthony.

"I am," answered the man in broken German, without stirring.

"And I am the superintendent sent by the new proprietor," said Anthony.

"That is nothing to me," growled out the man in a rude tone, and turning short round, went back into the room and bolted the door from the inside.

Anthony was furious; "Knock the window in and help me to get hold of the rascal," he called out to his companion.

The latter coolly seized a piece of wood, dashed it against the panes so that the rotten frame fell jingling into the room, and with one bound sprang in through the opening. Anthony followed.

The room was empty, and the chamber contiguous equally so; from thence an open window looked upon the field: the man had jumped out of it. "Through the window, in and out again, like the devil," cried out Karl, and leapt after the fugitive. Anthony hastened back and went round the house. He heard the barking of a dog, and saw Karl fall upon the faithless inspector and collar him, notwithstanding the furious yelling of the ferocious dog. Anthony sprang to his assistance, and held the fugitive fast, while Karl gave the dog a kick that flung it to the ground. They then dragged the inspector, who was struggling violently, into the house.

"Drive to the inn and fetch the gens-d'arme and the landlord," cried out Anthony to the coachman, who, quite indifferent to their proceedings, had meanwhile unloaded the luggage of the travellers from the carriage. He drove quietly off, and the fugitive was taken into the room, Karl seized an old handkerchief and bound his hands behind his back. "I beg your pardon, inspector," he said, "it will only be for a few hours, till the gens-d'arme arrives whom we have ordered from Rosmin. In the meanwhile Anthony looked round the house; except the most necessary furniture nothing was to be found, neither books nor accounts. There was no doubt that the house had been cleared: a bundle of papers stuck out of the coat-pocket of the prisoner; Anthony pulled it out in spite of his opposition; they were transactions and documents in Polish. At length the driver came back with the landlord and the armed policeman. The landlord stopped embarrassed at the door, and Anthony explained shortly to the gens-d'arme the state of the case. "Write a memorial to the Landrath," said the latter, "and let the man come along with me at once. He can go in your carriage to Rosmin: it will be best for you to get rid of the fellow, for this is a bad place, and he will be safer at Rosmin than here, where he has friends and partners. After a long search, a sheet of paper was brought from the inn. Anthony wrote the accusation down, and added to it, at the request of the gens-d'arme, the Polish papers, which he had perused with many shakes of the head. The prisoner was lifted into the carriage, the gens-d'arme placed himself by him, and said to Anthony before he started, "I have long thought it would come to this; you will, perhaps, want me here often." So the carriage drove from the yard, and Anthony took possession of the property. He was as it were settled upon a desolate island. His leather trunks and travelling things stood in the open air against a mud wall; the publican was the only man in the Polish village who could give him any information or advice in this unpleasant situation.

Now that the inspector was gone the landlord became loquacious; he showed himself well-disposed, and humbly offered his services. A long conversation ensued. The result was pretty much what he



fearred from the warnings of the attorney Walther, and the magistrate at Rosmin. The arrested manager had during the last few weeks done his best to dispose of the stock, as he felt secure from detection owing to a report which had spread from the town to the village that the new purchaser would not take possession of the property. At length Anthony concluded the conversation with these words: "That villain will have to answer for what he has embezzled; our care now must be to preserve what still remains on the estate; you must be our guide for to-day."

They searched the deserted yard. Four horses and two plough-boys—They had gone to the wood—A few damaged ploughs, a couple of harrows, two waggons with ladders, a britschka, a cellar with potatoes, a few quarters of oats, and a little straw—the inventory did not take up much space; the buildings were out of repair, not from great age, but from the carelessness of the man, who for years had not prevented the elements from penetrating into them.

"Where is the dwelling-house?" Anthony asked. The landlord led them from the yard to the pasture-ground, which was a large tract of grass-land descending towards a brook: the cattle and sheep had trodden it into holes, the snouts of greedy pigs had rooted up the soil, mole-hills and rank tufts of grass were spread over it. The landlord stretched out his hand and said, "There is the castle. This castle is famous in the whole district," he added, with admiration; "no nobleman in the whole province has got such a stone house. The gentlemen in this country all live in houses built of mud and wood; even the richest of them, he of Tarow, has only a poor house."

About three hundred paces from the end of the barn rose a large building of rough brick, with black slate roof and a big round tower, the dark brickwork on the pasture-land, without trees and without a trace of life, stood under the grey-coloured sky, like a ghostly fortress, which some bad spirit had lifted up from the depth of the earth for the purpose of destroying from thence the verdant life of the landscape.

The three men approached nearer. The castle had gone to ruin before the workmen who built it had finished their work. From time immemorial an uncouth tower had stood there; it was built of large coarse stones, with small windows and air-holes. The ancient possessors had looked from its height over the tops of the woods, which then probably extended further into the plain; from thence they had ruled severely their serfs, who tilled the land at their feet, and toiled and died for them. Many a Sarmatian arrow had flown through the narrow windows on the assailing foe, and the rush of many a Tartar horse had been arrested before this hostile wall. Many years ago, a despot of this district had raised a monastery by the side of this dismal tower, in expiation of his sins. But the monastery had never been finished; and the walls had long stood there useless, till the deceased count had made it into a manor house for his family. He intended to raise a splendid building superior to any in the surrounding country. The front of the house was built up against the tower, so that it formed the centre, and advanced in a semicircle from the straight line; the two wings of the new house went towards the brook. The plan had been, to raise a high terrace before the castle; the main entrance was in the tower, and vaulted; but the terrace

had never been raised, and the stone threshold of the house door remained more than a man's height from the ground, and could only be entered by a ladder. No door closed the wide opening: the windows of the lower story were still in rough brickwork: they were barely closed with planks. In the upper story, some windows were ornamented with frames of carved wood, and large panes of glass had been put in, but were broken. In the apertures of the other windows there were temporary frames of rough fir-wood with small dim panes in them. On the battlements of the tower a host of jackdaws were sitting, and looked with surprise on the strangers; sometimes one flew off with a loud cry, and seated himself on another portion of the roof, and then stared down on the unwelcome intruders.

"An abode for crows and bats, but not for men," cried Anthony. "I don't yet see any entrance to this castle of robbers." The landlord led them round the building. At the back of the house, where the two wings formed a kind of horse-shoe, there were two low entrances to the ground-floor and the cellars; underneath were stables, large vaulted kitchens, and narrow cells for the serfs. From the pasture-ground a flight of wooden steps led you up to the first-floor. The door turned creaking on its hinges; a small passage led across the wing into the front part of the house; here everything was laid out on a large scale, and calculated for rich decorations. The round hall, a vault of the old tower, had a mosaic pavement of coloured marble; from thence you looked through the wide doorway into the open country. A broad staircase fit for a royal palace led to the upper story, where there was another vaulted hall with narrow openings for windows. On both sides were suites of apartments. Everywhere lofty and desolate rooms, heavy oak folding-doors, and dirty whitewashed walls. The ceilings were constructed of thick fir-stems joined like a chess-board. Some of the rooms had huge green stoves, others had none; in some the floor was of fine oak, in others of knotty fir-wood; a large hall with two gigantic fire-places for burning wood, had a temporary ceiling of old laths. The castle was laid out for a wild Asiatic household, for hangings of leather and silk from France, for costly woodwork from England, for massive plate from German mines, for a proud lord and countless guests, and for a swarm of serfs to fill the halls and ante-rooms. The builder of the castle must have been thinking of the sumptuous life of his wild ancestors while he was carrying out the work; he had hundreds of trees cut down, and his serfs kneaded many thousands of bricks with their hands and feet; but Time, inexorable Time, had raised his finger against his plans, and none of his hopes had been accomplished; he himself was ruined and died during the progress of the building, and his son, a child of foreign countries, had hastened the decay of his inheritance as much as a thoughtless absentee could. Now, the walls of the Sclavonian castle stood with open doors and windows; but no guest entered the house with his good wishes, only wild birds flew in and out, and the marten glided inquisitively amongst the beams. The walls were standing useless and ugly, and threatened to crumble and fall like the race who had lived there.

Anthony went with quick steps from one room to another; in vain he hoped to find one in which he could fancy the two ladies living, who looked to this dwelling as their only asylum. He opened all the

doors, climbed the creaking stairs, and scared the birds who had come in through the opening and were still clinging to their last summer's nests, but he found nothing but uninhabitable rooms, with dirty whitewashed walls, or rough brick-work; everywhere draughts of air, doors ajar, and dingy windows; in the great hall some oats were heaped up; a few rooms of the upper floor had formerly, perhaps, served as a tolerable abode for human beings—bad chairs and a rough table was all the furniture now in them. At last Anthony went up the ruinous staircase in the tower, and ascended to the roof; there he looked from the battlements upon the ground below him and over the plain. On his left the sun was sinking behind a mass of grey clouds into the dark shade of the fir woods; on his right lay the irregular square of the farm-yard; behind it, along the high road, the ugly huts of the village; at his back flowed the brook from the setting sun to the village, along the borders of which a strip of meadow-land was visible; around the meadows and pasture-land lay the ploughed fields in a state of dead repose, a dingy green covered most of them, only a few showed brown clods the mark of recent cultivation; on the arable ground here and there wild pear-trees, the delight of the Polish husbandmen, were growing—big stems with large heads; under each of them a little island of grass and bushes, which was variegated with fallen leaves; nothing but these wild trees, the abode of countless birds, they and the dark forest at the edge of the horizon, interrupted the monotonous plain; for behind the meadows and fields, and behind the sand-hills, the prospect was bounded by the fir woods. The sky was grey, the soil dingy, the trees and shrubs by the brook without leaves, and the wood, with its projections and bays, like a rampart separating this part of the earth from mankind—from all civilisation—and from all the joy and beauty of life.

Anthony's heart grew heavy. "Poor Leonora! poor people!" he sighed aloud, and folded his arms sorrowfully. "It is horrible! but it may be improved; with money and taste man can do everything. This house could be furnished and fitted up without any great expense; curtains, carpets, some hundred feet of gold cornice, and the upholsterer and painter would change it into a stately castle. It would be easy to level the pasture-land and sow it with fine grass, to arrange some flower-beds with brilliant colours, to plant some shrubs behind them, and to hide the cottages of the village with the foliage of the trees; and if to the house and park were brought a feeling of energy and activity, even this dreary and desolate landscape might present a bright picture. There is nothing wanted but capital, labour, and a well-regulated mind; but how is the baron to find these commodities? The comfortable arrangement of this house should be the crowning-work of an active and prosperous life. The life of the baron is broken. The only rational way that it could be done, is, with the surplus revenue with which this estate could easily furnish its master. But thousands will be wanted to create the germ of a new life in this disorder, and years must pass before the soil will give more than the farming expenses and the scanty interest of the invested capital."

Meanwhile Karl had been examining two rooms in the upper story with the eyes of a connoisseur. "These two please me best," he said

to the landlord; "they have whitewashed walls, boarded floors, stoves, and even windows; it is true that the panes are defective, but till the glazier comes thick paper will not be despised; here we will establish ourselves. Can you fetch me somebody who knows how to use a broom and a scouring-cloth? Well! you can. And mark you, get some sheets of paper—a glue-pot I carry about with me: we will at once bring up some wood, then I will light a fire, boil the glue, put in the paper panes, and stop up the crevices: but first of all help me to bring our luggage from the yard. Be quick, man."

The landlord was carried away by Karl's eagerness, the luggage was brought up, Karl unpacked a box with all kinds of tools, and the landlord ran to the inn to fetch his maid-servant.

While this was going on, several riders trotted along the high road up to the farm-yard—fine-looking men, dressed like gentlemen; they stopped before the inspector's house; one of them alighted and knocked vehemently at the closed door. Anthony called to his companion, and Karl hastened towards the strangers. The riders galloped up to him. "Good-day," cried one of them to him, in good German. "Is the inspector at home?"

"Where is the manager? where is Bratzky?" cried out the others, as impatient as their wild horses.

"If you mean the former inspector of this estate," answered Karl, drily, "he will not escape you, although you don't find him at home."

"What do you mean?" asked the first rider, going up close to Karl; "I beg you will inform me."

"If you wish to speak to Herr Bratzky, you must take the trouble of going to the town; he is in the stocks."

The horses reared, the riders thronged around Karl, lively exclamations in Polish burst from all lips. "In the stocks! For what reason?"

"Ask my master," answered Karl, pointing to the door of the tower through which Anthony was passing.

"Have I the pleasure of seeing before me the new possessor of the property?" asked the rider, approaching the tower, and lifting his hat.

Anthony looked with astonishment on the stranger below; the voice and face reminded him of a gentleman in white kid gloves, who at a critical moment had shown an unpleasant eagerness to hold a court-martial upon Anthony. "I am Baron von Rothsattel's agent," he replied. The horse of the rider reared twice, and the rider turned quickly away and spoke some words to his companions. Upon this, an elderly man, with a sly, fox-like face, called out, "We wish to speak to the former inspector of the place, on some private business; we hear that he has been arrested, and we beg of you to inform us for what reason."

"He tried by flight to avoid giving over the property, and there is reason to suspect that he has acted dishonestly."

"Have his things been seized?" rejoined the rider.

"Why do you ask me this question?" said Anthony.

"Begging your pardon," said the other, "the man had by chance documents in the house that belonged to me; it might occasion me difficulties if I should lose them."

"His things have been taken with him to the town," answered Anthony. Again the horses of the riders drew together, a discussion

in a low tone ensued, then the strangers, after a short salute, galloped back to the village; there they stopped for a moment before the inn, and disappeared at last on the high road behind the wood.

"What did they want, Herr Wohlfart?" asked Karl; "that visit was like a gust of wind."

"It was indeed," answered Anthony, "and I have reasons for thinking that there is much in it. If I am not mistaken, I have seen one of the gentlemen in very different company. Most probably this Herr Bratzky has made himself friends through the unrighteous mammon."

Night covered the castle and forest with her dark veil. The ploughmen returned with their horses from the wood: Karl brought them before Anthony, barangued them in a short speech in Polish, and engaged them for the new proprietor. Then the landlord came to see that all was right, brought water and a load of wood, and said to Anthony, "I beg you, gracious sir, to be on your guard during the night; the peasants are sitting in the tap-room talking about your arrival: some of them are bad fellows. I would not warrant that they might not to-night put a match to the straw, and burn the farm buildings."

"I warrant that none will," replied Karl, throwing a fresh log upon the stove. "There is a fair breeze just blowing upon the village; nobody would be such a fool as to set fire to his own full barn. We will take care that this same west wind shall blow as long as we are here; tell your people so. Have you brought the two potatoes?"

Anthony ordered the host to return the next morning, and the two companions were left alone in the desolate house.

"Don't be afraid of the incendiaries, Herr Anthony," continued Karl; "everywhere tipsy rogues have the bad habit of threatening fire. And after all—by your leave, I must say—it would be no great harm. Now, Herr Anthony, that we are by ourselves, and do not see these Polish goings on, we shall be a little comfortable."

"You are right," said Anthony, and he pulled his stool near the stove. The wood crackled within the green tiles, and the red light of the fire tried to paint a fiery carpet, and drew strokes of light and shade through the whole room.

"The warmth does one good," said Anthony; "but don't you smell the smoke?"

"Naturally," answered Karl, who was at the door of the stove, cutting a round hole in the potatoes with his knife. "It is just the best stoves that smoke most, in the beginning of the winter, till they are accustomed to their work, and probably this fat, green fellow has not seen a fire for a generation: it is quite right that it should not be in order at once. Please to cut a piece of bread and fill the hole up. I am preparing our candlesticks." He took out a large packet of candles, cut off the lower half of the potatoes, stuck a candle into each, and placed them on the table as candlesticks. Then he produced the tin box. "It is inexhaustible," he said; "it will keep us till dinner-time to-morrow."

"Undoubtedly," said Anthony, cheerfully: "I have got a wonderful appetite. And now let us consider how we are to arrange our house. The furniture that we absolutely require we must get from the town; I will immediately make a list. Put out one of the lights; we must be economical."

Thus the evening was spent in making plans. Karl discovered that he could make part of the furniture in a few hours out of boxes and planks, and from time to time his companion's laugh resounded merrily through the despot's house. At length Anthony recommended that they should go to bed. They prepared their couches of straw and hay, unbuckled their trunks, and took out their bedding. Karl screwed a lock, which he took out of his box, to the door of the room, examined the charge in his carbine, and took his potato. "At what hour does my lord general superintendent wish to be called in the morning?"

"You are a good lad," cried Anthony, stretching out his hand to him from his bed.

Karl went into the adjacent room, which he had selected for himself. Shortly after both lights were extinguished—the first glimmer of life that had for years lighted up this deserted house. But for a long time the little goblins of the house cracked over the new fire, buzzed in the chimney, and went knocking at the doors and windows, astonished at the proceedings of the foreigners. At last they collected together in a corner of the old tower, and began to dispute, whether the flame which had been lighted up that evening would continue to burn, and whether from henceforth daily, a gay light would be shed from the windows on the pasture-ground, the fields, and the woods. And while they doubt whether the new state of things would be strong enough to last, the smoke drove the bats out of their abode in the chimney, and they fluttered drowsily about the battlements; and the screech-owls in the clefts of the wall shook their big heads and groaned over the new times

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## CHAPTER X.

HE who has always walked along the level path of life, bordered by law, regulated by order, custom, and fashion, which in his native country have been transmitted, as the habits of centuries, from generation to generation, and who suddenly finds himself thrown alone among strangers, where law can but imperfectly protect his rights, and where he has every day to struggle for the right to live, will only then fully appreciate the bliss of the holy circles, formed around each individual by thousands of his fellow-creatures—his family, his fellow-workers, his race, and his commonwealth. He may improve, or he may deteriorate in a foreign country, but he will become another person. If he is weak, he will sacrifice his own ways to the foreign influences under the spell of which he finds himself. If he has the stuff that makes a man, he will become one. Doubly dear to his heart will be the blessings, in the possession of which he has grown up, perhaps even the prejudices which clung to his life; and many things which he had looked upon with indifference, like air and sunshine, will now become his greatest good. It is only in a foreign country we learn to enjoy the charm of our native tongue, only in a foreign land that we feel what fatherland is.

Anthony had now to prove what was in him, and in what he was wanting.

On the following morning he began his inspection of the property. The estate consisted of one main farm, and three smaller ones dependent on it. Only half of the land was arable, a small portion was meadow land, and the rest was forest, skirted with bare sand. The castle and village were situated about the middle of the vast clearing: two of the smaller farms were at the opposite ends, east and west, both hidden by projections of the wood. The third was to the south, separated entirely from the rest of the property by a forest. It was contiguous to another Polish village, had its own farm-yard, and had from olden times been worked as a separate farm. It comprised more than a quarter of the land, had a brandy distillery, and had been let for some years to the distiller, who was a wealthy man. The lease had been prolonged by Ehrenthal, the rent was low, and fixed more for the advantage of the tenant than for that of the owner. However, this lease was at present a benefit to the estate, as that part at least yielded income. The ruined forest was under the charge of a forester.

The first walk over the fields of the main farm was as little cheering as possible; the soil was hardly anywhere prepared for winter produce, and where there were occasional traces of the plough, it was the work of the villagers, who considered the property of the absentee proprietor as their booty, and scowled sullenly, and with suppressed wrath, on the foreign agent. For years neither they nor their horses had performed any service, and the magistrate whom Anthony had sent for declared insolently that the community would not allow the old times to return. He pretended not to understand a word of German, and Karl's eloquence was unavailing to get anything out of him. The soil itself, though neglected and overrun with weeds, was in many respects better than Anthony expected, and the innkeeper boasted of its produce; it was only near the wood that it appeared really poor and unfit for cultivation.

"This will be a laborious day," said Anthony, putting his memorandum-book in his pocket. "Have the horses put to the britschka, we will drive to see the cows." It was at the small farm to the west that the cattle were kept, about half-an-hour's drive from the castle. A miserable stable, and an abode for the ploughman, were all they found. The herd of cattle, and two pair of draught oxen were in charge of the head ploughman: he lived there with his wife and a weak-headed herdsman. The people understood scarcely any German, and inspired no confidence. The wife was a dirty woman without shoes and stockings, whose dairy probably seldom experienced the cleansing effect of water. The ploughman, and sometimes the herdsman, went out ploughing with the oxen, just when they pleased, the cattle pastured on the uncultivated fields of the farm. "Here is some work for you," said Anthony; "examine the herd and look out for fodder for the winter, whilst I note down the buildings and implements." Karl reported; "Four and twenty milk cows, half as many young cattle, and an old bull; a dozen of the cows at most are fit for use, the others are good for nothing but to eat the grass. The whole are a bad breed; formerly some cows of a foreign breed seem to have been introduced here, probably Swiss, and a breeding bull far too large for the race of this country, and thus these ugly mongrels have been produced. The best have been exchanged, for there are some wretched village cows along with the herd, that keep apart, and

cannot have been long with the others. As for fodder; there is some hay for the winter, and some shocks of cat-straw; litter is wanting altogether."

"The buildings are hopeless," exclaimed Anthony. "Go on, coachman, to the distillery. I have studied the lease, and have some information on that subject."

The carriage rolled over a bad bridge across the brook, then through fields, and over a sandy plain scantily covered with wolfsmilk and millet grass, among the roots of which here and there the seeds of fir-trees had sprouted up, and like crooked shrubs bent their branches over the ground. Then they reached the forest, which was now only brush-wood, and stems like poles, with wide spaces between, in which the bare sand was visible; all about stood stumps of felled trees, round which lichens and heather were growing. Slowly the horses waded through the loose sand. Neither of the companions spoke, but they impatiently looked out for each tree which by a lucky accident was higher and broader than its wretched neighbours.

At length the prospect widened; still a dozen more fir-trees, and again a wide plain stretched before the travellers, equally monotonous and surrounded by wood, as the island of fields from which they had come. Before them stood a village church; they passed by a wooden crucifix, and stopped at the court-yard of another small farm. The tenant had doubtless heard of their arrival, and was probably better acquainted with the baron's situation than Anthony liked; for he received his visitors with a protecting air and stiff manner. He hardly condescended to show them into an empty room. And one of his first questions was, "Do you believe the Rothsattel will be able to maintain the estate? there is much to be done, and I am told the man is not in a situation to lay out much capital on it."

This arrogance and coolness provoked Anthony, but he replied with that firm calmness which mercantile practice gives: "When you ask me if the Baron von Rothsattel will be able to maintain the domain, I answer you, that he will be the better able to do so the more conscientiously his tenantry perform their obligations to him. At present, I am here to examine whether you yourself have fulfilled these duties. I have full power to survey your inventory according to the lease, and if you should now or in future value the baron's good will, I give you the friendly advice to treat his proxy with more civility."

"The baron's good will is quite indifferent to me," answered the insolent tenant; "but since you talk of your full powers, show me the paper."

"Here it is," said Anthony, quietly taking the document out of his pocket.

The tenant perused the paper attentively, or at least pretended to do so: after awhile he carelessly returned it, and said, rudely: "I do not know even that you have a right to go over my farm-yard; however, I won't object. Go and look at what you please." Saying this he put on his cap, and turned to go into the next room.

Karl seized a chair in his indignation, and stamped it on the floor, but Anthony walked with rapid steps and intercepted the man, and said to him, in a quiet, business tone: "I leave you the choice whether you will at once take us over the farm yourself, or leave me to instruct the law court to make the inventory; the latter will occasion



you an expense, which, I think, you will consider unnecessary. Your presence is needed to fix the value of the stock, and therefore you are bound to accompany us yourself. Moreover, I must suggest to you that the good will of the proprietor is necessary to a tenant, if he wishes to prolong his lease, and yours expires in two years. It will certainly be no pleasure to me to spend the next few hours in your company; but if you do not perform the duties of your lease, and of civility to me, the proprietor of your farm will take advantage of any flaw in your agreement to dissolve his connection with you. Now you may choose."

The tenant looked for some moments disconcerted, and seeing Anthony's resolute countenance, said at length, "Well, if you will insist—I meant no harm." Involuntarily he moved his cap and went before them into the court-yard. Anthony followed, and again drew out his book. The inspection began. No. 1. Dwelling-house, roof defective. No. 2. Cow-stable, a side of the wall fallen in, etc., etc. Thus they went on for a long time with disagreeable examinations and disputes. Anthony's business-like manner, and the warlike demeanour of his companion, at last exercised some influence on the tenant. He became more civil and even grumbled out some excuses.

When Anthony called for the carriage, he said to the man: "I give you a month to repair the dilapidations we have marked, at the end of that time I shall return." And from the carriage Karl called out to the unmannered fellow, "Perhaps you will have the kindness to take off your cap as I do, this is the proper time. There, that will do, in time you will learn it. Go on, coachman! When you come again," he said to Anthony, "the man will be like an earwig creeping out of the plum. He has grown fat on the farm."

"And the principal farm has become worse through him. Now we go to the new farm."

A small dwelling-house, on one side a long sheep-stall, on the other a stable and barn.

"Is it not wonderful," said Karl, looking at the building from a distance, "this roof has no holes, and at the corner a square of new thatch has been put in? Good gracious! the roof has been mended!"

"Here is our last hope," answered Anthony.

As the carriage drove up, the head of a young woman appeared at the window, with a fair-haired child by her side, both drew quickly back.

"This farm is the jewel of the estate," cried out Karl, leaping down over the side of the britschka; "here are clear signs of a dunghill, there runs a cock and the hens after him; zounds! a regular cock, with a sickle-tail. And lo, here at the window, a myrtle. Hurrah! here is a housewife, here is fatherland, here are Germans!"

The woman came out of the house, a neat-looking figure, followed by the curly-headed boy, who, at the first sight of the strangers, hastened to put his fingers in his mouth, and to hide himself under his mother's apron. Anthony asked for her husband.

"He will see your carriage from the field, and will be here immediately." She invited the gentlemen into the room, and speedily dusted two wooden chairs with her apron. It was a small white-washed room, the furniture was painted red, and was very clean; the

coffee-pot was bubbling on the tiled stove. In the corner a Black Forest clock was ticking, and on a little wooden shelf against the wall stood two china figures and some cups, and below about a dozen books; a fly-flapper, and a birch-rod carefully tied with red ribbon, were sticking behind a small mirror. It was the first comfortable room they had seen on the whole extent of the estate.

"A hymn-book and a rod," said Anthony, kindly; "I am sure you are a good woman. Come here, little flaxen-pate." He lifted the abashed boy on his lap, and let him ride on his knee at a walk—trot—gallop, till the little urchin resolved on placing his finger elsewhere than in his mouth.

"He is accustomed to that," said the woman, pleased; "his father does the same when he is good."

"You have passed through a bad time," said Anthony.

"Ah, sir!" exclaimed the woman, "since we have heard that a German family has bought the property, and that we must preserve all for you, and that you would soon come, and perhaps live here, we have been as happy as children. My husband was all day as if he had been at a tavern, and I have been crying for joy. We fancied that all would be set right now; and one likes to know for whom one works. My husband has had a serious talk with the shepherd—he is also from our country—and they have both agreed that they will not suffer the inspector to sell anything now, and my husband told him so. But for many weeks nobody came: we inquired every day at the inn, and my husband went to the magistrate at Rosmin to get information, and at last he was told that you would not come at all, and the estate would be sold again. Then, a fortnight ago, the inspector came with a foreign butcher, and desired my husband to give up the sheep to him; my husband refused, whereupon they threatened him, and tried to enter the sheep-stall by force; but the shepherd and my husband placed themselves before it and prevented them; then they drove off, cursing and swearing that they would have the sheep in spite of them. Since then our men have been up every night: there hangs the loaded gun which the bailiff has borrowed; and whenever the shepherd's dog barked, or anything stirred in the yard, I have started up, in great anxiety about my husband and the child. They are dangerous men here, Herr Superintendent, and you will find it so."

"I hope many things will improve," said Anthony, "You lead a lonely life here."

"Well, it is lonely," said the woman; "we hardly ever go to the village, and only sometimes, on a Sunday, to the German villages, when we go to church. But there is always something to do in the house, and——" she continued, embarrassed, "I will tell you honestly, and if you are displeased it shall cease: I have dug a little spot behind the barn, we have inclosed it, and made a garden; I have grown there what I wanted for the kitchen; and then," she added, hesitatingly, "there are also the hens, and a dozen ducks; and, if you won't be angry, the geese on the stubbles; and," she proceeded, putting her apron to her eyes, "the cow and the calf."

"Our calf," called out the little flaxen-pate, clapping his hands on Anthony's knees.

"If you object to our keeping the animals for ourselves," said the woman, weeping, "they shall all be given up. My husband and the

shepherd have had no wages since the last shearing time, and we were obliged to procure the necessaries of life by selling something; but my husband has kept a reckoning of all, that you may see that we are not dishonest people."

"I hope it will prove so," said Anthony, to console the excited woman. "Meanwhile, show me your garden; if it is possible, you shall be allowed to keep it."

"It is bare now," said the woman, and led the visitors to the enclosed spot, the beds of which had been dug up in preparation for the winter. She bent down and collected some flowers which still remained—some asters, and her pride, the autumn violet. She made a bouquet of them, and presented them to Anthony. "Because you are a German," she said, with a cheerful smile.

They heard hasty steps in the yard. The bailiff came, in his working jacket, and with ruddy cheeks, and presented himself. He was a handsome young man, with a sensible manner, and a countenance which awakened confidence. Anthony spoke encouragingly to him, and the man, full of zeal, hastened into the house and fetched his account-books.

"First we will take a look at the farm," said Anthony; "I will take the books with me; come to-morrow to the castle, there we will talk matters over."

"The horses are in the field," explained the bailiff; "I myself drive one plough, and the shepherd's boy helps with the other. There are only four horses now, formerly we had twelve in our stable. This year we have raised little more than sufficient for our subsistence, and fodder for the cattle; everything is wanting."

This walk through the farm-yard was pleasant, the buildings were in tolerably good order, and the stores in hand promised to be sufficient for the stock during the winter. At last the bailiff with a joyful face opened a door in the loft of his house, and pointed to a heap of peas. "You have seen the straw over the sheep-stall, here are the peas. I hid them from the inspector, because I considered that they belonged to you. There was some selfishness in it, also," he continued, honestly, "for we were so situated that we received nothing, and I had to think of something to maintain this farm with, in case the winter should bring no help."

The bailiff's wife came up to them with her boy as they left off speaking; her face beamed with joy at the prospect of improvement in their situation.

"It is all right," said Anthony, smiling; "I hope we shall go on well together. And now to the sheep: we will walk. Come with us, bailiff." The carriage drove slowly on in advance, and the bailiff explained to them the condition of the fields. Not one quarter of the arable land belonging to this farm was cultivated, large portions had remained for years as pasture-ground.

Karl hurried impatiently forward as they approached the woolly flock, which at present was the only treasure of living creatures that belonged to the estate. The shepherd came slowly to meet the strangers, accompanied by his two dogs; one, an experienced old stager, which kept pace with its master, and seemed to reflect as deeply as he did on the new destiny of the property; the other, a young cub, which, as a beginner in the difficult vocation of a shep-

herd's dog, tried in vain to maintain an appearance of calm dignity, and repeatedly ran in front of his master in juvenile ardour, barking at the strangers, till a disapproving growl of its experienced comrade made it stop. The shepherd took off his broad felt hat ceremoniously, and waited till the stranger accosted him. As a reflecting man, and a natural philosopher, he knew who they were; but it would have been unbecoming in one whose whole life had been passed in restraining the forwardness of sheep and dogs, if he had himself shown the curiosity of a young kid. The bailiff introduced the two gentlemen by a circular wave of his hand to the shepherd, who, bowing his head repeatedly, showed that he believed in the truth of what had been signified to him.

"A fine flock, shepherd," said Anthony to him.

"Five hundred and twenty-five head," answered the shepherd; "eighty-six of them lambs, and forty fat sheep." He looked with searching eyes into the flock, for one that was worthy of being shown as a specimen, bent down, and seized the animal with a rapid grasp by the hind leg, and showed the wool. Karl began an inspection; the animals were large and strongly made, and suited to the character of the property, and more equal in form and wool than they had expected. "When they get food enough they will give their wool," said the shepherd, proudly; "It is first-rate wool."

A yearling was inconsiderate enough to cough; the shepherd looked disapprovingly on the ill-behaved beast. "The flock is quite healthy," he said.

"How long have you been in this service?" asked Anthony.

"Nine years," answered the man. "When I came here the beasts looked like the poodles in the town, with naked hind quarters. It has been a great trouble, no one has looked after the flock, but it has not been the worse for that. If I had only pea-straw, and in the winter common peas for the ewes."

"We will see what can be done," replied Anthony; "the farm is short of stores for this winter."

"That is true," said the shepherd, "but there is fine fallow pasture."

"I quite believe," said Anthony, laughing, "that your sheep are not discontented. There are few fields on which your dog has not barked at every season of the year. I have heard with pleasure how you defended your flock for your new master. Are the people here often troublesome to you?"

"I cannot say so," answered the shepherd. "Men are everywhere alike—they will not obey, and they have no reflection. I would sooner train a dog for my sheep, than a man." He leant on his long staff with his legs stretched out, and looked benevolently down on his dog, who meanwhile had been loyally barking round the flock, and had now returned to his master, and rubbed his nose against his trousers. Look at that dog! When I have taught a dog two years, he is either good, or good for nothing. If he is useless, I turn him off, but if he is good, I can depend upon him as long as he lives, as much as upon myself. Now that boy there, with the wethers, has been three years with me, and I cannot warrant for an hour, that he will not get some crazy idea, and run himself to the left, instead of driving my sheep to the right, therefore I say men are not to be trusted."

"On whom then do you trust in this world?" asked Anthony.

"First on myself," said the shepherd, "because I know myself; then on my dog Crambo, whom I also know; and above all, as is fitting—," and he raised his head for a moment towards heaven, then whistled softly to his dog, and Crambo circled again round the flock. "And you," continued the shepherd, "will you remain here with the baron?"

"I think so," answered Anthony.

"And may I ask in what capacity? Inspector and steward you are not, or you would have looked at the wethers; they must be sold, it is high time. Well, may I ask you what you are to be to the new master?"

"If it is a question of title," replied Anthony, "you may call me accountant."

"Accountant," said the shepherd, reflecting, "then I must talk with you about my salary."

"You may, shepherd, next time that I see you."

"There is no hurry," said the shepherd, only one likes to know. There is a pane of glass broken in my room; the glazier will, I suppose, be coming again to the castle; I beg, Herr Accountant, you will think of me."

Karl and the bailiff now came up. Anthony told the coachman to drive to the forester's.

"You wish to go to the forester's?" asked the bailiff, with embarrassed manner.

"He will go to the forester's!" repeated the shepherd, and walked some steps nearer.

"Why do you wonder?" asked Anthony, from the carriage.

"It is only—" said the bailiff, hesitating, "the forester is an extraordinary fellow, and if the baron himself were to come he would not surrender."

"Does he live in a fortress, then?" asked Anthony, laughing.

"He has entrenched himself," said the bailiff, "and lets nobody enter his house. He lives in his own strange way."

"He is a wild man of the woods," said the shepherd, nodding his head.

"The Poles say he is a sorcerer," continued the bailiff.

"He can make himself invisible," cried out the shepherd.

"Do you, also, believe that?" cried Anthony, amused.

"There are no witches," said the shepherd, with energetic disapprobation, "though the villagers believe in them. The forester is a man like all of us."

"He is at bottom a good man, but he has his peculiarities," said the bailiff.

"I hope he will respect my full powers; it will be his own loss if he does not."

"But it will be better if I were to speak to the forester," said the bailiff; "perhaps you will allow me to go with you—he has great confidence in me."

"So be it," concluded Anthony; "take the reins, the driver can attend to the plough; and now, forward to the dangerous man."

The bailiff turned into a cart-track, which led among young fir-trees

into the wood. The ground was again sand, and the vegetation scanty. Along a by-way they went, over roots and stones, deep into the forest. At the end of a division of fifteen years' growth, the cart-track ended, the bailiff tied the reins round a stem, and begged the gentlemen to descend. They proceeded along a narrow footpath, through thick underwood; the fir-branches brushed their clothes; the close air was filled with the scent of the pine; behind the young trees the ground sloped, the earth was wet, and a soft cover of green moss spread over it, and a group of high fir-trees reared their dark heads to the sky. Here was the forester's house, shaded by the brown boughs of the forest-trees—a low wooden building, enclosed by a strong palisade, around which, outside, was planted a triple row of young firs, as a hedge. A little brook trickled from underneath the fence; it fell murmuring over some stones, and was covered by broad-spreading ferns. Below, the fresh green of the moss; above, the stems of trees, a hundred years old, covered with bearded lichen; in the midst, the house, almost hid behind its green fence, was a sight in that desert of sand and heather to rejoice the heart. No path was to be seen, not even the trace of a footstep on the moss, only the barking of dogs from the yard, announced that it was not the habitation of Frau Holle, or the seven little dwarfs, but of living men.

The visitors went round the fence, till they reached a narrow door, of strong boards nailed together and firmly locked.

"His bullfinch is at the window—he is at home," said the bailiff.

"Then call him," answered Anthony.

"He has long known that we are here," continued the bailiff; "look at his peep-holes! He is watching us already; that is his way. I must give him my signal, otherwise he will not open."

The bailiff put two fingers in his mouth and whistled three times, but all remained still. "He is suspicious," said he, sadly; again he sounded his shrill whistle, till the barking of the dogs became howling, and the bullfinch at the window began to beat about with its wings.

At length a rough voice was heard from the other side of the fence: "Who the deuce have you got with yon?"

"Open, forester," cried the bailiff, "the new master has come."

"Go to the devil with your masters," the voice returned angrily; "I have had enough of that breed."

The bailiff looked bewildered on Anthony. "Open the door," said the latter, in a commanding tone; "it will be better for you to do willingly what I can compel you to do."

"Compel?" asked the voice; "we will see if you will compel me."

The muzzle of a double-barrelled rifle was put through the peep-hole in the door, and moved slowly from one side to the other.

"The weapon will not help you," answered Anthony; "we have something with us that from this day forth will be stronger in this forest than force—that is, our right, and law."

"Indeed!" replied the voice; "and who are you then?"

"I am the superintendent of the new proprietor, and order you to open this door."

"Is your name Moses or Levi?" exclaimed the voice again. "I will have nothing to do with any superintendent in the world. Whoever comes to me as superintendent I consider as a rogue."

"I wish the devil would knock you on the head," cried Karl, in

violent indignation; "how dare you speak so disrespectfully to my master, you cursed shoeblack!"

"Shoeblack?" shouted out the voice; "that pleases me: it is the most rational word that I have heard for a long time."

The bolt was withdrawn, and the forester stepped out from the door, which he closed behind him. He was a short, broad-shouldered man, with grey hair, and a long grey beard, which hung down over his breast: two sly grey eyes sparkled like live coals out of a wrinkled face; he wore an old threadbare coat, out of which the colour had been entirely taken by sun and rain; he held his double-barrelled rifle in his hand, and looked defiantly at the strangers; he resembled the stump of one of the forest-trees: at last he said, "Who was it called me names?"

"I!" answered Karl, stepping forward; "and you will get more than bad names if you go on in your insubordination."

"What kind of cap is that you are wearing?" asked the old man, surveying Karl attentively.

"Have you become a mushroom in your forest, that you do not know it?" answered Karl, waving his soldier's cap round his head.

"Hussar?" asked the old man.

"Invalid," answered Karl.

The old man pointed to a small strip of ribbon on his own coat; "Landwehr, 1813 and 1814."

Karl put his hand to his cap and saluted: "My respects to you, old one, but you are a bore, nevertheless."

"Well, from your words one would not take you for an invalid," said the forester; "you look fierce enough, and you can swear, also. Then you are no dealers or agents?" he inquired turning to Anthony.

"Now be reasonable," exclaimed the bailiff. "This gentleman is commissioned to take possession of the whole property, and to manage it till the proprietor himself arrives. Times will improve, forester; this gentleman is quite different from what we have had here latterly. You will get into trouble with your stubbornness."

"Oh!" said the forester, "you need not concern yourself about my getting into trouble; I will take care of that myself. So you are a plenipotentiary? For these last few years, every day some one has come with full powers: and I can tell you," he continued, wrathfully advancing some steps, "you will find no books or reckonings with me; my accounts stand thus: for the five years that I have been placed over this wood as forester, I have been quarrelling with those 'full powers;' every 'full power' has cut wood for their own pockets, and at last the peasants from the villages have taken as much wood as they chose, and when I held my barrel to their noses, they held out to me some dirty scrap of paper from a 'full power' man, which allowed them everything. I had no longer any power, and have lived here by myself. There is very little game; I have eaten what I have shot, and sold the skins and fur, for a man must live. For five years I have not had a farthing of wages, so I have taken them for myself—every year fifteen of these stems. As far as you see the clearing, there stood ninety year old trees, and I have cut down five times fifteen of them; those still standing will last for three winters more: thus far goes my account. After the last was cut down, I should have shot my dog, and looked out for myself a

quiet place in the wood." He looked gloomily down on his rifle. "I have been living here for thirty years; I have buried my wife and children in the German churchyard, and do not care what becomes of me now. As far as the bark of my dog reaches, and my rifle ranges round this house, the forest is well kept, the rest belongs to the "full power men." There is my account; now do with me what you please." In great excitement he struck his rifle on the ground.

"I will reply to what you have said to me," answered Anthony, "inside your lodge, which from henceforth belongs to your employer, Baron von Rothsattel." He advanced to the door, and laid his hand on the wooden bolt: "Hereby I take possession of this property for the new landlord." He opened the door, and made a sign to the forester: "Keep your dogs back, and show us into your room, as is proper."

The forester did not object, but went slowly forward, called the dogs to him, and opened the latch of the house-door.

Anthony entered with his attendants. "And now, forester," he said, "since you have opened the house for us, I will answer you at once. We cannot undo what has been done in this forest up to this day, and therefore won't speak of it any more. From henceforth you shall again receive fixed pay and your allowance, and we will make a contract to that effect. From this day I place the wood, and all that belongs to forest rights, under your charge; your duty is to maintain the rights of the landlord as an honest forester, and from this hour I make you answerable. I shall support you in everything that is right; where I cannot do it myself, I shall demand the assistance of the law. We will be severe against all depredators, in order to stop disorder. A better discipline must be introduced on these neglected estates, and the new proprietor expects that you will help him as a faithful and obedient man. The lonely life you have been leading during the last few years must cease; we are countrymen, and you must come regularly to the castle and give your report about the forest, and we will take care that you shall not be abandoned in your old age, if you will honestly do what I desire of you. Give me your hand."

The forester had listened to Anthony's speech abashed, and with his cap off; now he clasped the offered hand, and said, "I will."

Shaking hands with him, Anthony continued: "I engage you in duty and service for the new proprietor."

The forester held Anthony's hand within his long, and exclaimed at last, "It will rejoice me if I should live to see things improve on this property; I will do my best, but I tell you beforehand, it will lead you a rare dance: between the inspectors and the neglected farming, the people on the estate have become robbers, and I fear my old rifle will have to say the last word more than once."

"We will put up with no wrong, and we will do no wrong, and will wait the result," answered Anthony, seriously. "And now, forester, show us your dwelling, and prepare to accompany us into the wood." Anthony walked through the small house: it was made of rough beams: the room was lined with boards, the light entered dimly through the little panes, the brown colour of the walls and the black roof increased the darkness of the room, and gave it a mysterious character. The objects fastened round the wall could only be discerned indistinctly. Horns, dogs' collars, hunting implements, and



stuffed birds. A small cupboard with kitchen utensils stood near the stove. "I am my own cook," said the forester, "and get what I want from the inn." Two or three birdcages were hanging at the window, one over the other, and the twitter of the tiny wood-birds, their ceaseless quarrelling, love-making, and prattling, sounded like a pleasant conversation which the forest held with its old keeper. A raven was sitting near the stove with ruffled plumage: white feathers in his head and wings showed the old age of the bird. It had its neck shrunk in, and appeared as if in deep thought, but its shining eyes watched every motion of the strangers. The bedroom was next the sitting-room; there hung the weapons, and by the bed stood a wooden chest. A grating before the window showed that this was the citadel of the house.

"Where does this door lead to?" asked Anthony, pointing to a trap-door in the floor.

"It is the cellar door," answered the forester, hesitatingly.

"Is it vaulted?" asked Anthony.

"I will take you down," said the forester, "if you will come alone."

"Wait for us in the yard," called out Anthony to his companions in the parlour.

The forester lit a lamp, carefully bolted the door of the bedroom, and led the way with the light. "I never thought," he said, "that any other eye than mine would see my secret in my lifetime." A few steps led them into a narrow vault, scantily ventilated by a crevice in the wall. On one side the foundation was broken through, and a low gallery went into the ground: it was supported by stems which rested against each other at an acute angle.

"This is my badger's hole," said the forester, holding the lamp into a triangular dark opening; the passage runs underground as far as the young firs. It is above forty steps long, and it has taken me a long time to dig it out. In this way I creep out of the house, and in again, without anybody seeing me; and I have to thank it for being able to hold out here; for this is the reason the stupid peasants fear me as a sorcerer. While they have been watching me, and saw me go into the yard, and thought themselves secure in carrying on their depredations, I suddenly stood behind them. It is now ten years since a gang broke into my house; they intended to take my life, but I darted like a badger through the hole. Don't betray what I have shown you to any one!"

Anthony promised, and they returned back to the yard. There they found Karl employed in fastening the wooden trough of a young fox down into the ground by four pegs. The fox was insensible to the attentions of the hussar; it snapped furiously at him, rattled its chain, and endeavoured, from under the board with which Karl had fastened it into its kennel, to bite his hand and legs. "You wish to kiss my hands, you little red-head!" cried Karl, hammering. "You are a fine young fellow!—what kind, soft eyes you have! So—ready—done—now spring over and back again. It comes at a call, forester! A good-humoured beast! Quite your character, comrade!"

The forester laughed. "Can you manage a fox-trap?"

"I should think so," said Karl.

"There are more of those chaps about; if it pleases you we will set some of those traps next Sunday."

They walked together through the wood in the greatest harmony. Anthony called the forester to him, and made him give him the necessary information. The old man's report was indeed not good. There was hardly as much timber fit to be felled as was wanted for the farm-buildings. The former system of plunder had ruined the forest. When at the end of the wood, the forester took off his cap, and respectfully inquired what hour he might come to the castle the next morning. Anthony perceived with pleasure that he had succeeded in concealing the secret misgivings which troubled him in his new position.

When the two friends were sitting together in the evening, before the green stove, Anthony said to his faithful partner, "I will tell you what causes me the greatest anxiety. I feel ignorant and helpless before every ploughboy, and yet it is my duty to make myself respected by the men. I have seen clearly in these two days how little good-will alone will do. Now, give me your advice: what shall we do next with the farm?"

"First sell all the useless cattle, and dismiss at once the bad people that are with the cows; collect together the cattle and horses which remain, and bring them to the great farm, that they may be under control. Whatever can yet be done in the fields, with our scanty force, must be done with regularity—nothing hurried. Straw and oats must be bought. You give over to me the charge of the farm till next spring, when a regular bailiff will be necessary. I shall not do very well, but better than any of your other people."

It was late in the evening, when a hasty step was heard on the staircase. The innkeeper entered, with a large stable lantern, and a face announcing bad news. "I feel it right to inform you of what I have heard. A German from Kunau, who passed through just now, brought the intelligence that Bratzky did not arrive in Rosmin yesterday."

"Not arrive!" said Anthony, springing up.

"Between two and three miles from Rosmin, in the wood, the carriage was attacked by four men on horseback. It was dark. Bratzky was sitting, handcuffed, in the carriage—the gens-d'arme by his side. The riders overpowered the gens-d'arme, and put the handcuffs on him; then lifted Bratzky, with all his things, out of the carriage, put him on a horse, and away they went with him into the forest. Two of the riders stayed with the carriage. They held their pistols at the heads of the gens-d'arme and coachman, and forced the latter to turn out of the road into the thicket, and then rode away. The coachman said that the horses were gentlemen's horses, and that they talked together like the great folk. The gens-d'arme is bruised, but otherwise not hurt; but they have taken your papers from him."

The friends looked at each other, started, and thought of the riders of yesterday.

"Where is the man who brought the news?" asked Anthony, and seized his hat.

"He was in haste to go forward, on account of the darkness. To-morrow we shall hear more about the business. It has not happened for years, that a carriage in which a gens-d'arme was sitting, has been attacked by horsemen. When they have plundered hereabouts, it has always been done on foot."

"Did you know any of the riders who were last night in the village, and called to see the inspector?" asked Anthony.

The innkeeper cast a sly glance at Anthony, but hesitated to answer.

"Why, the gentlemen were from the neighbourhood," urged Anthony; "you ought to know some of them."

"Why should I not know them?" answered the landlord, troubled. "It was the rich Herr von Tarow, with his guests. A powerful man, Herr Wohlfart! He is the head magistrate of police, and over your property too. And what had he to do with Bratzky? Bratzky, as inspector, had also the charge of the police here, and has often been an agent for the nobleman in horse-dealing and other business. If the police wish to speak with the inspector, why should they not? He of Tarow knows what to do and how to talk." Thus the innkeeper chattered away with great volubility, but his eyes and countenance told a different tale.

"You have your suspicions?" cried out Anthony, looking fixedly at him.

"God forbid that I should have suspicions!" continued the landlord, frightened; "and, Herr Wohlfart, if you will allow me to tell you my mind, do not suspect any one. You will have enough to do on the property, and will often want the assistance of the nobleman. Why should you make enemies for no purpose? You are here in a country where the masters ride in troops, and then separate, and lay their heads together, and again separate. Prudent people take no heed of it!"

When the host had said "Good night," and left the house, Anthony said gloomily to his companion, "I fear not only the property will cause us anxiety; but there is something else going on around us, against which we two, with all our wits, shall not be able to stand."

The bold seizure roused the whole neighbourhood. Anthony was summoned several times in the course of the following weeks to Rosmin. His depositions had no result; the magistrates did not succeed in finding out the criminals, nor in securing the inspector whom they had carried off.

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## CHAPTER XI.

The first weeks of their stay were spent by the two settlers in an activity that sent them dead tired every night to their bed, and by degrees they established themselves in the place. Karl was on the following day introduced as bailiff, and seized the reins, as far as there were any, with a firm hand. Anthony gave the charge of the household and kitchen to an active woman he got from a German village in the neighbourhood. She prepared the simple fare of the inmates of the castle, and of the workpeople. The most difficult task was to get upon any tolerable footing with the villagers. Anthony's quiet firmness succeeded at last in preventing any open opposition. One of his first measures was to make an application to the magistrates for the redemption of their mutual obligations. Karl's cavalry cloak at-

tracted several old soldiers to him, and through these, who were the fashionable people in the village, the settlers acquired some influence over the others. At last several offered of their own accord to serve at the castle, or to work by the day.

Anthony had written to the baroness, and had not concealed from her the condition of the estate, the unpleasant neighbourhood, nor his doubts of the possibility of the family settling there for the winter. He had asked if they would not rather stay in the capital till the spring. Then came a letter from Leonora in answer, in which she was commissioned by her parents to say that they kept to their resolution of leaving the town—a residence in which was painful to her father and to themselves; and she begged him to have the castle put, as far as possible, in a habitable state. Anthony called to his trusty companion, “They are coming, after all!”

“Zounds!” said Karl, “it is fortunate that we have inquired for workmen—bricklayers, carpenters, smiths, potters, and glaziers. With your leave, I will send a messenger to Rosmin immediately. I wish only I could get rid of that dirty-brown oil colour from the doors that covers the beautiful oak, but lye-water will not touch it. How many stoves shall we want?”

An eager discussion began. “The whole of the ground-floor shall remain unfinished,” said Anthony. “We will close the windows with thick boards; only at the entrance to the hall we will have a strong door, because we shall have to pass through there continually. The walls cannot remain as they now are, and we have no one but the bricklayer of Rosmin.”

In that case,” said Karl, “I propose that we should paint the rooms ourselves. I am first-rate in veining.”

“You cannot do it,” said Anthony, looking with doubt at his trusty companion. “No, we will have all the rooms done of the same colour. What do you think of brown?”

“Hem!—Not bad,” said Karl.

“I know Fraulein Leonora likes that colour best; but it must not be too dark: a light mixture of yellow, grey, red, and green—perhaps a little black.”

“Ha!” said Karl, puzzled, “that kind of colour.”

“Of course we shall choose the colour of the tint ourselves, for the man.”

“That is my business,” said Karl; “but I tell you befsrehand, those chalk colours are rascals—you put blue on, and the next day it is white—you have the finest orange in your brush, and when it dries on the wall it looks like old linen.”

“Between ourselves,” answered Anthony, “whatever we do the ladies will not be satisfied; so I think we will arrange things as cheaply as we can, and to look tolerable.”

On the following day the hammering and painting began in the house. In the lower story, the carpenter made his workshop; in the upper, the large brush of the plasterer washed the walls indefatigably, and white figures with large aprons carried the pails of limewash up and down stairs. Karl, during this time, was like a man with ten arms; whenever he could disengage himself from the farming, he was painting with all sorts of brushes on wood and wall; he ran about with a foot-rule, knocked in nails and curtain-hooks, and was the next

minute in the field or stable. Everywhere he whistled his soldiers' songs, and encouraged the workmen. As the fitting-up of the house advanced, his turn for embellishment became stronger. He had purchased some hundredweight of oil-colour, which was excellent, and he developed great taste in painting. He actually ventured to give to a number of things which he thought fit for it, the appearance of grained wood; and he succeeded, with the help of a feather and soft brushes, in making a great effect. He carried his brush and embellishments even into the farm-yard, and did not cease entreating Anthony, till the latter consented to having the clay walls white-washed. "In this weather it dries like in summer," said Karl; "my only regret is that we cannot put some colour on the thatch." As a compensation, he insisted upon painting two new potato carts, the old fire-barrel, and the best ploughs, with fine blue oil-colour. "There must be something in this yard to please the eye," he said, by way of excusing himself, "and it will pay, for these Poles go on much better when they have gay colours."

The necessary arrangements had been made at the castle, and on a cold September day the arrival of the proprietor and his family was expected. The sky had come to Karl's assistance, by spreading a white covering over the landscape, and thereby hiding any unpleasant sights from the new comers. Snow lay on the pasture land and on the sand, the tops of the firs were adorned with white crowns, and branches of splendid ice crystals glittered on the leafless trees. The ugly thatched roofs of the village cottages were painted white, and on the broken balustrades of the bridge the white flakes from the clouds lay like frozen foam. Every projection of the castle, the battlements of the tower, and the ridge of the roof, wore white festive caps, forming a striking contrast with the red brown of the walls. It was a day full of business and expectation for the inhabitants of the castle. Waggons with furniture and implements were unpacked, and everything was arranged as well as possible in the hurry. The housekeeper and the baliff's wife twined long garlands of fir branches, and adorned with them the entrance-hall and the doors of the rooms. The sun was now setting, and the silver tint of the landscape turned to a golden glow, and then to a faint red, which also faded away, and the rising moon threw a ghastly blue light over the fields and woods. In the house, lamps were lit against the walls, and as many candles as possible were placed in the rooms. Fires were blazing in all the stoves, and the comfortable warm rooms were filled with the resinous smell of the fir branches. After many experiments, Anthony had hit upon the brown colour for the walls which he had so much at heart. The gay curtains were drawn down, and the open suite of rooms, lighted up with the candles, looked so habitable, that Anthony asked himself, astonished, how the labour of a few weeks could have produced such a change. Karl had placed, on both sides of the castle, pans of pitch, and their blazing light shed a glare upon the snow, and cast a red glow all round the walls of the mansion.

Downstairs in the hall the dignitaries of the estate were assembled. The forester, in a new green coat, and the medals of the years of war on his breast, and a hunting sword by his side, stood in a warlike attitude near the bailiff and the shepherd. The housekeeper and

the wife of the bailiff had put their best ribbons in their caps, and tripped about in unquiet expectation. Karl also joined them in a frock-coat. Meanwhile, Anthony walked once more through the rooms, and listened for the cracking of whips, which would announce to him the approach of the proprietor. His heart was beating: for him, also, a new era would begin from that day. Full of privations as their life had been to the settlers, he and his companion had felt themselves masters of the castle; from their constant intercourse they had been able to pass through many sorrowful hours. Now Karl was to go to the farm-house, and he himself, at the wish of the baron, was to live in a room in the castle; by this arrangement, he would be brought into daily intercourse with the family; and he asked himself how this would answer. The baron himself was almost a stranger to him; he had spoken to him only for a moment, in the sick room, when, under the pressure of heavy grief, the sufferer had signed Anthony's full powers. How would the baronlike his proceedings, and himself? And this man was blind: yes, blind.

Leonora had written, that the physician had no hope of restoring sight to her father's eyes; out of compassion, this fearful truth had been concealed from the baron. He himself, in his darkness, still clung to the hope that time and a skilful hand would remove the black cloud that lay over his eyes. Anthony had not concealed the truth from his confidant. He had also been obliged to tell the people on the estate that the baron was at present suffering from his eyes, and wore a bandage over them: and on the faces of all, he had read how well they understood that it was a misfortune when the master's eye was not on an estate. Again his heart throbbed, as he thought of Leonora, in whose society he was now to live. How would she and her mother behave to him? He resolved carefully to suppress what he now considered as idle pretensions. He wished at once to place himself in a position that would put it out of their power to humble his self-respect. And yet he mentally asked himself whether they would treat him as confidant and equal, or make him feel that he received bread and salary from them as masters. In vain he repeated to himself that his own proper feeling ought to make him assume the latter; but again and again visions rose in his mind, of how charming it would be for him to live with Leonora.

From the village was heard the cracking of the drivers' whips: the family arrived in two carriages. The farm people, the innkeeper, and some of the villagers stood round the pitch lights. Zealously the bailiff opened the door of the carriage; and as Leonora descended, and the bright light fell upon her countenance, the women pressed nearer, and the men cheered loudly; all looked full of expectation at the carriage. But the readiness of the people to give them a welcome was not encouraged by any friendly greeting in return. With great difficulty the baron was lifted out of the carriage; with head bowed down he went upstairs, supported by his daughter and the servant. The baroness's pale face followed; she gave only a silent look at the functionaries of the property, and a short greeting to Anthony, who led the way to the rooms which had been arranged for her.

"It is all very nice, Herr Wohlfart," she said to Anthony, with trembling lips. And when he stayed to learn her first wishes, she dismissed him with a slight movement of her hand, and "I thank you,"

When the door had closed behind him, the baron stood there, a helpless, broken-down man, in a strange room, and the baroness burst into a violent fit of weeping. Leonora leaned against the window; she looked out on the white winter, and on the black line of the horizon, and big tears rolled down her cheeks. With a heavy heart Anthony joined the men below, and told them that the family were tired with their journey, and would speak to them the next morning. Karl had the carriages unpacked; led the old cook, who was crying like her master, into the room below, and showed her the kitchen. None of the family were seen again that evening. Very soon the lights disappeared in the rooms, and only before the doors, the pitch was still blazing in the pans; the wind blew the red flames here and there; and a cloud of soot rose to the window, where the baron was hiding his face with his hands.

Such was the entrance of the family to their new estate.

"How beautifully Wohlfart has arranged everything," said Leonora, the next day, to her mother.

"These high rooms are dreadful," answered the baroness, shivering; and she wrapped herself up in her shawl; "and the monotonous brown of the whole suite of rooms makes the house look still more desolate."

"It is time to ask him to come here," urged Leonora, in a low tone.

"Your father is not yet in a condition to see him."

"Do not leave my father alone with Wohlfart," implored the daughter; "it would be terrible if my father should treat him unkindly."

The baroness sighed. "We must accustom ourselves to the daily society of a stranger in our house, which will be a trial to your father and to us."

"What arrangements will you make with respect to the house?" asked Leonora again. "Wohlfart will, of course, dine with us?"

"That is impossible," said the baroness, firmly. "You know how sadly our dinner passes. Your father is not yet calm enough to bear the presence of strangers."

"Then I suppose he is to dine with the servants?" answered Leonora, bitterly.

"He will be served in his own room. We shall ask him to dinner every Sunday: and, if your father is pleased with him, sometimes of an evening; more would be a burden to all parties. It is wise to establish things on an easy footing; the state of your father will excuse it."

She rang the bell. Anthony was sent for.

When he entered, Leonora met him, and gave him her hand silently, with tears in her eyes. He was much moved also when he saw the traces of grief on the countenance of the mother.

The baroness begged him to take a seat, and expressed to him her thanks for his great services. She made him tell her about his arrangements in the castle, and praised everything in a manner which quite satisfied him; and discussed the regulations for the household. She advised with him as with a friend; and led him to propose himself the plan she had wished for.

Then she continued, "My husband wishes to speak to you. I beseech you always to bear in mind that the baron is an invalid. He

has suffered fearfully both in mind and body ; he is never a day without pain ; and the unaccustomed helplessness of his state pains him incessantly. We ourselves avoid carefully everything that can excite him, and yet we cannot prevent his having his dark days. You also will, I am sure, make allowances for him should his temper annoy you. Time, it is said, heals everything ; I hope it will also restore peace to him."

Anthony promised to be most cautious.

"My husband wishes to be made acquainted with all that should be laid before a proprietor for his decision, and it is natural that just now, in his helpless state, he should insist, with a certain vehemence, on having his own views carried out. And yet I am afraid of anything being brought before him that may annoy him ; therefore I beg that when you have anything important to inform him of, you will let me know : perhaps I may succeed in sparing you many an unpleasant hour. I shall have my writing-desk placed in one of the rooms near your own, and shall pass several hours there every morning. Leonora has become her father's private secretary ; so it will be possible to make your position in our house less unpleasant. Be so kind as to wait for me here : I am going to announce your visit to the baron."

The baroness left the room. Anthony looked gloomily down, Leonora hastened up to him, and exclaimed, as cheerfully as she could, "Everything brown, Wohlfart ; we browns will keep faithfully to each other. You are not put out at our coming, you uncivil gentleman."

"Only on your own account," said Anthony, pointing to the snowy plain outside. "When I walked over the fields I always thought how lonely it would be for you here. When in the evening I passed through the large rooms, I felt how tedious you would find the days. The principal town is more than ten miles off ; and there you would not find much : the small circulating library would be of no use to you."

"I will draw," said Leonora, "and do ladies' work. Alas ! that will be difficult, Herr Wohlfart ; I am very awkward at it. For myself, I do not care for laces and collars ; but mamma is accustomed to have so much of everything, and in such good order. Ah ! how sorry I am for mamma."

Anthony endeavoured to comfort her.

"We were obliged to leave the town," said Leonora ; "it would have been the ruin of us all if we had stayed in that horrid neighbourhood. Our estate in other hands, everywhere embarrassed and cold faces ; everywhere false friends, hypocritical words, and condolences which cut one to the heart. It is a relief to me to be here alone. And if I must freeze and starve here, I would rather bear that than the shrugging of the shoulders of Frau von Werner and her children. I have learned to hate mankind," she burst out vehemently. "When you have been with papa, come downstairs ; you must show me the house, the farm, and the village ; I will see where my poor pony is lodged, and how the people look here."

The baroness returned, and took Anthony into her husband's room.

Embarrassed, the baron rose awkwardly from his arm-chair. When Anthony saw the hollow face, the bent figure, and the black bandage over the eyes, he felt deep pity for the unhappy man. With warm emotion he expressed how desirous he was to serve him ; and begged for indulgence if he had not done everything to meet the



baron's wishes. Then he told him once more the condition in which he had found the farms, and what had been done up to that time.

The baron listened silently to the report, making only short remarks. But when Anthony began to talk of the baron's other affairs, and spoke, though with the greatest caution, yet with the clearness of a man of business, of the baron's present obligations, and the means of meeting them, the baron began to writhe upon his chair like a criminal on the rack; and Anthony felt what a painful position he was placed in, from the necessity of his being, though a stranger, initiated into the most secret affairs of the baron; as a stranger, who spares another; but in spite of every precaution, betrays that he does spare him.

The baroness, who was standing behind the chair, looked more and more anxiously at her husband's attempts to master his agitation; at last she gave an eager sign with her hand, and Anthony was obliged to break off in the midst of his report.

When he left the room, the baron flung himself passionately back, and, turning to his wife, burst out in violent excitement, "You have placed a guardian over me!" He was quite beside himself, and the baroness tried in vain to calm him.

Such was Anthony's entrance into the family.

He also went back sorrowful to his room.

In these few hours he had learned that there was little hope of his being on good terms with the baron. He was accustomed, in all his business matters, to be quickly understood by the parties concerned, and to decisive proceedings; but now he must receive ill-judged decisions through the mouths of the ladies, and perhaps, after long explanations. His position also with the ladies appeared to him uncertain. The baroness had treated him with great consideration, but as a stranger. She would, he feared, always remain a great lady to him, who would grant him as much confidence as appeared necessary, and by civil coldness, would prevent any closer intimacy. Even Leonora's kind voice could not cheer him up. They both walked through the farm thoughtfully, like two men of business, whose only object is to value the estate.

Anthony lived for some months in the same way as at first; his life was serious, monotonous, and not without constraint; he worked assiduously, and dined alone in his room. Silently the old servant brought, and took away, the dinner. When he was invited to join the family party, the conversation was anything but lively. The baron sat like a lump of ice, and effectually checked all cheerfulness. Formerly Anthony had admired everything that surrounded the family; the arrangement of their drawing-room, and the elegant decorations of their house. Now the same pieces of furniture were placed in the rooms, the baroness's little birds had, by great care, got through the winter journey. There were the same carpets, the same embroideries, and the same perfume in the room; but now that he daily beheld the foreign birds, he got tired of them, and the room was no longer interesting to him, except that he had the first arrangement of it.

Anthony had come, impressed with great respect for the polished manners and easy tone of conversation of the family. Oppressed, out of humour, and broken down as they now were, he could not expect the elegant gaiety that had charmed him so much in Frau von Bal-

dereek's drawing-room. They were uprooted from their accustomed society: all the little accessories were wanting, and the excitement was wanting, which maintains the elasticity of the mind, and overcomes ill-humour and petty anxieties. He said modestly to himself that he could not give them these; but other things also had surprised him unpleasantly. When, after an evening during which conversation had flagged, he returned to his room, he often regretted that they took no interest in many things with which he was conversant; and it was evident that the cultivation of their minds was quite different from his own. Soon he took the liberty of thinking that their education had not been of the best kind. Most of what he had read was unknown to the family; and when they talked over the newspapers, or the most common-place topics of conversation, he was struck by their limited knowledge of the political state of foreign countries. Past history was not an agreeable subject to the baron, and when he condemned the English constitution, he was right in calling his point of view impartial, for he was entirely ignorant of it. Another evening, Anthony was disturbed to find that the family opinions of the situation of the island of Ceylon were decidedly opposed to the place assigned by navigators to that island. The baroness, who took an interest in entertaining books, and was fond of being read to aloud, worshipped Chateaubriand, and read light novels of the day, written by blasé ladies; Anthony thought Attila insipid, and the novels trashy. Very soon he perceived that his companions judged the world from a different point of view to what he did. They measured everything, without being conscious of it, according to the interests of their class. Whatever suited these, found favour, even when it was oppressive to others; and what did not agree with them was condemned, or at least tacitly put on one side. Their judgment was often mild, sometimes liberal; but there always sat upon their heads an invisible helmet with a coronet; they looked at the doings of common mortals through the narrow opening of the vizor, and when they were annoyed at what could not be altered, they silently closed the beaver, and shut themselves up. The baron sometimes said disagreeable things; but his wife understood in a masterly way how to pass over anything unpleasant.

The family belonged to the German church at Neudorf, but there was no gallery or seat near the altar, and they would have had to sit in the nave with the country people, which was not correct: so the baron had a chapel arranged in his own house, and the clergyman came over to the castle sometimes. Anthony seldom appeared at the private service: he rode over to Neudorf, and sat there by the side of the magistrate, and amongst the peasantry.

Nor was his business free from embarrassment. The travelling agent of some wine-merchant penetrated through the sand and fir-woods as far as the baron's study; he was an impudent rogue, had a passionate love for, and was very eloquent on, the subject of races and steeple-chases; he brought a packet full of sporting news, and thus fooled the baron into ordering a hogshead of claret. Anthony looked at the empty cash-box, cursed the hogshead, and hastened to the baron's study; and it required long manœuvring with the ladies to reduce this order to moderate dimensions.

The baron was displeased with his carriage-horses; they were old,

and were chestnuts: this last quality ought now to have been indifferent to him, but it had vexed him for several years, for his family had always had the same coloured horses. According to ancient tradition, an ancestor of the family had done some extraordinary deeds, riding on a roan horse, in some forgotten battle; indeed there was an ancient song, in which the following stanza occurred:—

“ Who drives through the storm, so wild his career?  
’Tis the form of a high-born, brave cavalier;  
The red blood streams from his roan charger’s side,  
Thick from his saddle drips down the red tide.”

The Rothsattels applied this song to their ancestor, and, therefore, they preferred roans to all other horses; but this colour being rather rare in good horses, the baron had not been fortunate enough to meet with any. Now fate determined that a dealer in the neighbourhood brought a pair of roans to be looked at. The blind baron took a fancy to the animals, which pleased the ladies; he had the horses led before him and put into the carriage, listened to the clatter of their feet, and felt them over carefully; he took Karl’s opinion, and became absorbed in the project of giving his wife an agreeable surprise by their purchase. Karl, fearful of this unnecessary expense, rushed to Anthony, and confided to him the danger. Anthony went again to the audience chamber, but this time he did not meet even there with a willing hearing; the baroness allowed that he was right, but begged him urgently to let the baron have his will on this one occasion. Finally the new horses were quietly put into the stable, and the purchaser gave not only the old chestnuts, and the whole contents of his private cash-box to the dealer, but also a promise that two hundred scheffels of oats should be given him at a very low price, after the next harvest. Anthony and Karl were greatly provoked at this last condition, which only came to their ears some months later.

The forester was so unfortunate as to be in no favour with the family. The lively colours in which Anthony had described his first meeting with the wild man of the woods might possibly have injured him with the baron; the baroness was displeased with the abrupt manner of the old man, who in his solitude had lost that pliability which the family expected in their inferiors. One evening at tea, a plan came to light to dismiss the man before he should gain a claim by longer service to support in his old age. In his place a younger forester was to be engaged, who might occasionally be put into the baron’s livery and act as a chasseur. The family had been accustomed to such a person at their former property. Anthony could with difficulty master his indignation, while he explained that in the wild and unsafe state of the neighbourhood an experienced man of the kind, who was feared by all the poachers of the vicinity, was much more trustworthy than a stranger. Leonora took his side, and with cold silence on the part of the baron, and a resigned look from the baroness, the plan was given up. From that time they both bore with the rough old man, with the vizor closed, but with a good grace.

These were little discords that are unavoidable, when men of different habits are united together in daily life, but it was no proof of contentment that Anthony was obliged to make these reflections to himself. He came to an understanding not only with Karl, but also with the forester and shepherd, in many things, better than with the

family, and he felt a certain degree of pride in being different from them, and one of the people.

Leonora, also, was not such as he had seen her in his dreams. He had always adored in her the distinguished lady, and had felt the cordial intimacy with which she treated him as a distinction. Now she had ceased to appear to him in this light: he knew the patterns of the laces on her sleeves, and saw some holes in her morning dress, which the careless Leonora had not observed. He had read the few books she had brought with her, and had often, in conversation, arrived at the limits of her knowledge. Her opinions no longer made any impression on him, and he would hardly now have thrashed his friend Fink for asking if she had any wits; he asked himself the question, and answered it very rationally. She had not learned as much as another girl he knew, and her feelings were by no means so refined; but she had an honest, fresh nature, with strong feelings and an upright judgment. And she was beautiful. He had always thought her so, but his tender respect had long surrounded her image with a hazy cloud. Now when he saw her daily, in a simple morning dress, in the common performance of every-day work, he felt the entire charm of her blooming youth.

He was often displeased with her. At first she had pressed him to tell how she could make herself useful in the house. He told her it would be of great use if she overlooked the household, and kept the house-books accurately. He ruled an account-book for her, and as she showed great want of practice in making use of the lines when ruled, he had the pleasure of teaching her. She threw herself with great zeal into her new occupation, and ran ten times a day to Babette in the kitchen, in order to get information. But her accounts were not very correct, and Babette's mysterious strokes were more to be trusted. When she had kept her accounts conscientiously for a week, some days came when the sun shone gaily: then she could not refrain from going out shooting with the forester early in the morning, or rambling about on her pony far beyond the boundaries of the property; then she forgot the postman, the cook, and the household books. She wished to read history, and to learn English under Anthony's tuition, and Anthony was delighted at this idea. But she could not remember the dates; she had a horror of learning the vocabulary, and she escaped from these hieroglyphics, and went to the stable, or even sometimes to the bailiff's room, whose mechanical contrivances she could look at for hours with the greatest interest. When Anthony called her one day for her English lesson, he found her in Karl's room, with a plane in her hand, eagerly working at the back seat of a sledge, and she said to him good-humouredly, "Do not give yourself so much trouble about me, Wohlfart, I learn nothing; I have always had a thick head."

Again the ground was covered with snow, and millions of crystals of ice sparkled on the trees and fields in the sunshine. Karl had fitted up two sledges, an old one for two persons, and a racing sledge for Leonora, which he had put together with his own hands, and, under her superintendence, had painted gaily. At the morning audience, Anthony had told the baroness that he must go to Tarow on some police business in the afternoon. "We knew the family of Tarowski," answered the baroness, "when we were at the baths; we liked Frau von Tarowski and her daughters very much. I wish that

the baron would not so entirely shun all connection with the neighbourhood; perhaps I might persuade him to pay a visit there with us to-day. At all events we ladies will profit by the opportunity of driving there under your protection."

Anthony reminded her quietly of Bratzky's disappearance, and his suspicions about it.

"After all it is only a suspicion," answered the baroness, "and there is no question that it is our duty to call on the family. Besides, I cannot believe that Herr von Tarowski himself took part in the transaction."

In the afternoon the sledges drove up, the baroness went with the baron in the larger one, and Leonora insisted upon driving the new racing sledge herself. "Wohlfart will sit behind me on the back seat," she decided. The baron whispered to his wife, "Wohlfart?"

"I will not let her drive alone," answered the baroness, calmly. "Do not be uneasy. Besides, as he is in your service, the impropriety will not be great, and we shall drive up together."

The little bells sounded over the plain, Leonora sat happy in her nutshell, calling cheerily to her horses as she drove it. She often turned round and showed Anthony her smiling face, which looked so lovely to-day under her dark hood, that she quite won his heart. Her green veil now floated in the wind, now touched her cheek, clung to her face and concealed her countenance from him; then he saw the veiled figure before him as if in a green twilight at a great distance; and directly after, his breath fanned the riband fluttering on her neck, and he saw that there was nothing but this silk covering between his hand and her golden hair and white neck. Anthony was so absorbed in this contemplation, that he could scarcely refrain from passing his fur gloves gently over her capotte, when suddenly a hare darted out from the snow close to him. The hare beckoned to him and threatened him with its paws, and made significant somersets round him. He understood the friendly warning, and withdrew his fur glove; the hare, pleased with having done a good deed, galloped over the snow.

Anthony succeeded in changing the current of his ideas. "The white road," thought he, "shows no trace of man, no track nor step, no sign of any other life but the silent sleep of nature. We are travellers in a foreign land on which no one has ever set foot before. One tree is like another, the snowy plain is boundless, all around the silence of death, and above the laughing sunshine. I wish we could go on so the whole day."

"I am delighted to give you a drive," said Leonora, bending back to him and giving him her hand. Anthony forgot the hare, and could not restrain himself from imprinting a kiss on the glove.

"It is Danish kid," said Leonora, laughing, "so you had better not trouble yourself."

"Here is a hole," said Anthony, ready to repeat the attempt.

"You are very civil to-day," exclaimed Leonora, slowly drawing back her hand; "it becomes you well, Wohlfart."

The fur glove was stretched out in pursuit of the retreating hand. Thereupon two crows on the trees got into a loud dispute; they screamed emulously, flew about, and hovered scolding over Anthony's head. "Go to the devil, you rogues," thought the impassioned Anthony, "you shall not disturb me."

But Leonora, looking at him with honest simplicity, continued seriously: "Yet I am not sure whether it does become you to be so civil to me. You ought not to kiss my hand, if I am not disposed to do the same to you, and what is right for one ought to be so for the other. Huzza, my horse, go on!"

"I am curious to see how the Poles will receive us," began Anthony, again resuming the regular tone of conversation.

"They cannot do otherwise than be civil," replied Leonora, "we were for weeks in the same house with Frau von Tarowski, and made all our pleasure parties together. She was the smartest lady at the baths: she and her daughters made a great impression by their distinguished manners; they are very charming and fashionable."

"But he has a pair of eyes like the forester's fox," said Anthony; "I wouldn't trust him a step."

"I have made myself smart to-day," and Leonora turned round again laughing; "for the girls there are very attractive, and the Poles shall not say that we look shabby by their side. How do you like my dress, Wohlfart?" As she said this she threw back one corner of her fur.

"You will not cut a bad figure in it," said Anthony, with a sly air; "there is some brown in it, consequently it is beautiful."

"You faithful Wohlfart!" exclaimed Leonora, and again held out her hand to him over the edge of the sledge. Alas! this time the little warning animals were too weak to counteract the spell, which attracted the fur glove to the Danish one. It was necessary for something more important to happen. As Anthony for the third time stretched out his hand, he saw his own hand, against his will, gradually rise and describe a circle in the air, while he himself was sinking, until he found himself lying full length in the snow. Amazed, he raised his head and saw Leonora sitting some paces further, near the sledge which was upset. The horse was standing quietly in the road, laughing in its own way. Leonora had looked too much at her companion, and too little at the road, and so they had been overturned. They both rose gaily to their feet, and shook off the snow. Anthony raised the sledge up, and again they galloped on; but the sledge romance was at an end; Leonora looked more at the road, and Anthony removed the snow from his sleeves.

The sledge drove into a vast court-yard. A long clay house of one story, plastered outside, and with a shingle roof, looked familiarly with its blind windows, on the wooden stables opposite. Anthony jumped off and asked a man in livery for the house of the nobleman. "This is the palace," answered the Polish servant with a bow, and helped the visitors out of the sledges. The baroness and Leonora exchanged looks of surprise. They entered an untidy hall. Several bearded individuals hastened up, to relieve the visitors of their winter wraps, and a low door was opened. A numerous company were assembled in the large sitting-room. A tall lady in black silk came forward to meet the visitors, and welcomed them courteously; the daughters also hastened up to them, young ladies with slender figures, and their mother's eyes and tournure. Sundry names of young gentlemen were mentioned—Herr von, Count von, etc., all fashionably-dressed men. At last the master of the house came; his cunning face beamed with delight and an innocent smile lighted up his fox's eyes. The reception

was perfect, on all sides there was agreeable ease accompanied with quiet dignity. The baron and his ladies were greeted as dear friends, and even Anthony received his share of civility. His business was settled in a few words and Herr von Tarow reminded him with a smile of their short interview before. "That rogue of an inspector has escaped you," he said, with a tone of regret; "never mind, he will not escape the fate he deserves." "I hope not," answered Anthony, "he, and those who helped him." The eyes of Herr von Tarow endeavoured to resemble those of a dove, as he continued: "The fellow must be hid somewhere." "Probably in the neighbourhood," said Anthony, casting a suspicious glance on the wretched buildings of the court-yard.

In vain Anthony looked amongst the company present for the stranger whom he had seen twice, and whom he supposed to be anxious to conceal himself from the eyes of Germans; but there was another gentleman present of very decided manners who was treated by the others with very great respect. "They come and they disappear," thought Anthony; "they ride together and separate," as the inn-keeper said: "it is not with single individuals we have to deal, but with a whole race." At that moment the stranger approached and began to converse with him with great civility. But though he talked with apparent indifference, it soon became evident to Anthony that he was endeavouring to lead the conversation, and to draw out from him, as a German, his opinions and sympathies. He therefore thought it necessary to be discreet, and as soon as the Pole perceived this, his interest in the conversation suddenly ceased, and he turned to the ladies.

Anthony now had leisure to look round the room. Amongst coarse furniture, made by a village carpenter, stood a pianoforte from Vienna; the window-panes were patched, and a torn carpet lay on the black floor near the sofa. The ladies were sitting on seats covered with velvet, round a worn-out old table. The lady of the house and her grown-up daughters were dressed in smart Parisian toilette; but when a side-door opened, Anthony saw, in a gloomy-looking room adjoining, some children running about so scantily clad, that he heartily pitied them on that cold winter day: they themselves, however, did not seem to mind it, as they were fighting and making a noise like little devils.

A fine damask cloth was laid on the tottering table, and a silver tea-kettle placed upon it. Conversation flowed easily. Sprightly French bon-mots were interspersed with lively ejaculations in the melodious Polish tongue, and mixed up with these, monotonous German sentences. By the quick smile and vivacious manner of the speakers, and the fire of the conversation, Anthony could at once perceive that he was among foreigners. Words flew rapidly, in the eyes and on the cheek glowed the fleeting fire of lively excitement. They were an impulsive people, elastic, vibrating, and easily affected. Anthony was surprised to see how comfortably Leonora took her part in the conversation. A brighter colour shone on her face, she laughed and behaved just like the others, and looked flippantly at the gentlemen, whose eyes were bent politely upon her. The same smiles, the same natural cordiality which had secretly enchanted him were now lavished on strangers, who, in the night, on the high road, had been occupied in working injury to her father; and, moreover, the room, so wonderfully fitted up, the tapestry dirty and torn, the children in the adjoin-

ing apartment barefooted, the master of the house the secret protector of a rogue, and probably worse! All this displeased him greatly. He therefore confined himself to observing the company with cold reserve, and giving only the necessary answers to the civilities of the master of the house and his guests.

At last one of the young gentlemen struck up some chords on the piano: all started up and insisted upon having a dance. The lady rang the bell, four fierce-looking fellows rushed into the room, seized the large piano, and carried it, without any ceremony, out. The society hastened across the entrance-hall to the dancing-room opposite. When Anthony entered, he felt tempted to rub his eyes. It was an empty space roughly whitewashed, with benches against the wall, and in the corner a hideous stove. In the middle of the room linen was hanging, and Anthony did not understand how they were to dance here; but, in a trice the linen was pulled down by the servants, one of them ran to the stove and blew the oven, and after a few minutes six couples stood up for a quadrille. As there was not a sufficient number of ladies, a young count, with a small silky black beard and a pair of beautiful blue eyes, tied his cambric handkerchief round his arm, and with a graceful curtsy presented himself as a lady, and was forthwith gallantly led by one of the other gentlemen to dance. How happily the gay couples footed it to measure! The fire of their race sometimes blazed out through the nonchalance prescribed by fashion to the dancers of civilized life. Leonora floated amongst them, the baroness was engaged in animated conversation with the master of the house, and Frau von Tarow made it her business to amuse the blind baron. There was again the distinguished manner, the careless enjoyment of the moment, which Anthony had so often admired, but to-day it could only win a cold smile from his lips. That the German family should be so familiar with enemies, who were probably at that very moment plotting something against them and their nation, appeared to him undignified and unworthy of them; and when Leonora, at the end of the first dance, in passing by him, asked, in a whisper, "Why do you not dance with me?" he answered, "I expect every moment to see the face of Herr Bratzky in a corner of this room."

"Who would think of such a thing now?" exclaimed Leonora, much hurt.

Dance followed after dance, there was an increased glow on the faces of the young people, their curls waved loosely from the warm air of the room; moustached servants again entered, and handed iced champagne. The dancers sipped the cool drink standing, ready for a fresh start, and immediately after a cry for a Polish dance was echoed on all sides, to the tutor, who sat at the piano. Now the dresses floated, the dancers bounded, as if upon springs, across the room, the girls flew like shuttlecocks from one arm to another; and ah! Leonora was always in the midst of them. Anthony was standing conversing languidly with the Polish grandee, and listened coldly to the praises which he bestowed liberally on the German dancer. What was natural to the Polish girls, the rapid movements and the vehement excitement, made Leonora wild, and, as Anthony said to himself, disapprovingly, "unladylike." From her his eye wandered along the rough walls to the dusty stove, in which a huge log was burning, and to the ceiling, from which long grey cobwebs were hanging.



It was late when the baroness proposed to start; the furs were brought in, the guests wrapt themselves up, the bell rung, and the little bells sounded again over the snowy plain. Anthony was well content now, that Leonora should go with her father, and that he himself should hold the reins behind the baroness. Silently he drove the sledge, and continually the idea came across his mind that he knew another girl who would never have whirled round in the Mazurka in the enemy's house. That day Leonora also wore the steel helmet on her white neck.

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## CHAPTER XII.

HERR ITZIG had set up as a man of business. His visitors had to pass through a much-frequented house, and to ascend a not very clean staircase in a side wing. At the head of the stairs was a shining white varnished door, with a large brass plate, on which was the name V. Itzig. The entrance was closed, there was the big china handle too, everything like Ehrenthal's, only finer and more fanciful. After passing through the door, the visitor arrived at a large empty entrance-room, where a cunning Jew boy spent the day, half porter, half errand-boy, and, moreover, a spy for his employer's business. The boy differed from the original Herr Veitel, by a striking air of shabby gentility. He wore out old remnants of frippery, brilliant silk waistcoats, and a coat which was only a little too large for him. He was a proof that the new Firm was, in matters of toilette, and altogether in civilization more advanced than that of Ehrenthal, which, in many respects, was vulgar. The visitor, upon entering, was received by Herr Itzig in two small parlours, in the first of which was very little furniture but two strikingly-beautiful lamps, an acquisition made accidentally, as compulsory payment of interest for a promissory note. The second was the bedroom, and contained a plain bed, a long sofa, and a large round mirror, with a broad gilt frame, which was a purchase from the secret magazine of Herr Pinkus. Itzig himself was strikingly changed. On a dull day (by the doubtful light which penetrated from the yard into the rooms), and looked at from a distance, he looked like any other smart gent; his thin face had become fuller, the great freckles with which his face had formerly been spotted, had disappeared, and his hair, by means of pomatum and skilful brushings, had assumed a darker hue and softer texture. The new man of business still retained a predilection for black garments, but they were new, and no longer hung loose about his limbs, for Herr Itzig had also become more portly in person; he indulged himself now in good fare, and sometimes an empty wine-bottle even was to be seen on his writing-table, with the word "Moselle" on it, and by its side a sugar-basin and silver spoons. But splendid as the new establishment was, Itzig only used it at night, and during his official business hours. His heart was always attracted to his old inn, and to Loebel Pinkus. Thus he led a double life; one for the world as a smart man of business, in the newly-painted rooms, under the lustre of the two great lamps, waited upon by a fashionably-dressed gnome; the other, after his own taste, below the caravansary, a modest life, with red woollen curtains and a square

chest for a sofa. What, perhaps, made this asylum the more agreeable to him, was that he now exercised an undisputed sway over the landlord. Pinkus had, to his shame be it said, degraded himself so low as to be an assistant and agent of Veitel, and Frau Pinkus clung to the rising man of business with a reverence that deprived her husband of every breast of goose killed in the house.

One day Itzig was sitting carelessly on his sofa, in his official abode, smoking from an amber tip (he was quite the gentleman), and awaited a distinguished visitor. Suddenly there was a ring heard in the ante-room, the gnome flew to the door, and a shrill voice was heard. Presently there was a dispute in the ante-room, which induced Veitel to lock rapidly the drawer of his writing-desk which had been left open, and put the key in his pocket.

"Not at home, isn't he? but I tell you he is, you miserable green-haired blockhead!" screamed out the shrill voice, to the youth who was on guard. A struggle ensued, and the attendant was pushed aside; Veitel bent his head in deep study over an old mortgage, the door opened, and Herr Hippus made his appearance, with crimson face and ruffled feathers. Never had he looked more like an old raven.

"You order yourself to be denied? you bid that worm out there send old friends away? Of course you are grown genteel, you fool! Did one ever see such insolence! Because the fellow has swindled himself into two new rooms, his former friends are not good enough for him. But you are mistaken in me, my chap; I don't allow myself to be got rid of in that way."

Veitel contemplated the little wrathful man before him with a look that was anything but friendly. "Why did you make such a row with the young man?" he said, coldly; "he only did his duty. I expect a visit on business, and desired him to send all others away. How could I know that you would come? Haven't we agreed that you were to visit me only in the evening? Why do you come in my business hours?"

"Your business hours! you young lapwing, walking about with the egg-shell still sticking to its tail," burst out Hippus, still more enraged, and seating himself on the sofa. "Your business hours!" he continued, with boundless scorn, "for your business, any hour is good enough."

"You are tipsy again, Hippus," answered Veitel, really vexed. "How often have I told you that I would have nothing to do with you when you come from the brandy-shops?"

"Indeed," cried Herr Hippus, "you son of a frippery-wit; my visits are an honour to you at all times. Me tipsy?" he continued, hiccupping, "with what, then, you crack-brained fool? How can one get tipsy when one has no money to pay for a glass?"

"I knew that he was out of pocket again," said Veitel, with great indignation. "Only the other day I gave you ten thalers. But you are like a sponge, every groschen spent on you is wasted."

"But you shall show me to-day that it is not wasted," answered the old man, jeeringly; "you'll give me again ten thalers, and on the spot."

"That I won't," roared out Veitel. "I am sick of feeding you. You know our agreement. You don't get money unless you work for it. And now you are not fit to read or write anything reasonable."

"I am always good enough for you and such as you, if I had breakfasted ten times better than I have," said the old man, more quietly. "Here, what have you for me to do? You have become a niggardly miser, but I won't bear you a grudge for it. I will pardon you for having wished to turn me from your door. I will forgive you also having become a proud ass, and bragging, as you sit under lamps that were good enough for better people than you: and I will not deprive you of my advice, provided that you pay me. And so we'll make it up, my son. Now speak, what diabolical business are you at now?"

Veitel pushed the big mortgage deed over to him, and said: "First, you must look through this, and make an extract from it such as I want, and tell me the state of the thing. It has been offered me for purchase. But now I am expecting some one; you must go into the other room, take a seat by the table, and do your work. When you have done we'll talk of the money."

Hippus shoved the heavy bundles of papers under his arm, and steered his course towards the door of the second room. "To-day I will obey your wishes, because it is for you," he said, pleasantly, and raised his hand to pat Veitel's cheek.

Veitel bore this caress with great indifference, and was on the point of shutting the door, when the old drunkard pushed himself in again, and asked, with a sly look, "So you expect some one, my chap? Who is it, little Itzig? Is it a lad or a lass?"

"It is a money transaction," answered Veitel, shrugging his shoulders.

"A money transaction!" repeated the tipsy man, looking at his ally with tender admiration. "Yes, there you are great; great as a man, and as a swindler! Truly, he who gets money from you is lost. He had better jump into the water at once, though water is contemptible stuff. You little arch rogue that you are!" Saying this, he tossed his head up, and fixed his drunken eyes fondly on Veitel.

"You have come yourself to get money from me," replied Veitel, with a forced smile.

"Yes, I am firm," answered Hippus, stammering. "I am not flesh and blood, I am Hippus, I am death;" and he tried to laugh wittily.

The bell sounded outside. Veitel exclaimed, "Be quiet, and shut the door," seated himself on the sofa, took his amber tip, and awaited his visitor.

A sword clattered in the ante-room, and an officer of hussars entered. Eugene Rothsattel was looking a good deal older than the winter before; his delicate face was thinner, and there was a blue circle under his eyes. He entered with an appearance of indifference, which could not for a moment take in Herr Itzig, whose experienced eye perceived behind this mask, the fever which is common to debtors who are hard pressed.

"Herr Itzig?" asked the officer, haughtily.

"That is my name," answered Veitel, carelessly, rising from the sofa.

Eugene cast a disturbed look at the face of the money-lender. He who was now waiting for him to speak, was the person against whom his father had already been warned, and now fate was drawing him also into the same net. "I have in a few days to pay a debt to some agents here," the lieutenant began, "gentlemen of your acquaintance;

and when I wished to confer with them on the subject, they both informed me that they had sold their claims to you."

"I bought them unwillingly," answered Veitel; "I don't like to deal with officers. There are two bonds of eleven hundred and eight hundred, making nineteen hundred thalers." He put his hand into a portfolio, and took the documents out. "Do you own to these signatures as yours," he asked coldly, "and acknowledge these nineteen hundred thalers as the sum lent to you?"

"Perhaps that sum may be written there," replied the lieutenant, angrily.

"I ask whether you acknowledge that you have to pay me the amount of these two bonds?" asked Veitel again.

"In the devil's name, yes," exclaimed the lieutenant, "I own to the debt, though I did not get half of it in money."

Veitel locked up the bills in his desk, and said, shrugging his shoulders scornfully, "I have paid the full sum to those two persons; I shall call upon you to-morrow or the next day for my money."

The officer was silent for a while, and his hollow cheeks flushed slowly. At last, after a hard struggle, he began, "I beg of you, Herr Itzig, to grant me a little delay."

Veitel took his amber tip, and twirled it with evident satisfaction, as he answered, "I shall give you no further credit."

"Be reasonable, Itzig," the officer said, with affected familiarity. "Perhaps I shall very soon be able to pay you."

"In some weeks you will have less money than now," answered Veitel, roughly.

"I am ready to make over to you a larger sum, if you will have patience."

"I never do such business," said the lying Veitel.

"I will get you my father's acknowledgment of the debt."

"Baron von Rothsattel has about as much credit with me as yourself."

The lieutenant struck his sword on the floor in a rage. "And if I do not pay?" he burst out; "you know I am not bound to do so by law."

"I know," replied Veitel, quietly. "Will you pay me to-morrow or the next day?"

"I cannot," exclaimed Eugene, in downright despair.

"Then take care of the coat you wear," said Veitel, turning away.

"Wohlfart was right to warn me against you," cried out Eugene, quite beside himself, "You are a hardened—;" he withheld the last words.

"Speak out," said Itzig, "nobody hears you. Your words are like the fire in the stove: it crackles, and in an hour becomes charcoal. What you wish to call me, between ourselves, you will be called in a few days, by everybody in the streets, if you do not pay."

Eugene turned away with an oath, stopped for a moment at the door, and then rushed furiously out.

Veitel looked after him triumphantly. "Like father like son; he is in for it, as he ought to be," he muttered; "he cannot get the money. There is an end of the Rothsattels, and Wohlfart cannot save them. When I have married Rosalie, Ehrenthal's mortgages, also, will be mine; then the bonds which disappeared from my father-

in-law's room may be found again among his papers ; then I have the baron in my hands, and the property becomes mine."

After this little soliloquy, he opened the door which had separated Herr Hippus and the noble visitor—the fallen and the falling one—and found the little lawyer asleep, his head resting on his hands, and his hands on the papers. With heartfelt contempt, Itzig looked on the little black bundle, and said, "He becomes burdensome to me. He said he was death ; I wish he were dead, and so I were free of him." He shook the old man roughly, and hallooed to him, "You are good for nothing but to sleep. Did you come here only to snore ? Go home. I will give you the papers when you are in a better condition."

As soon as the lawyer had tottered off drowsily, promising to return in the afternoon, Itzig brushed his silk hat with enviable skill, put on his best coat, gave his hair, before the gilt mirror, the fashionable turn, and went to the house of Ehrenthal.

As he entered the hall he cast a sly glance towards the door of the office, and hastened past it to the stairs. On the first step he stopped. "He is sitting again in his office," he thought, listening ; "I hear him grumbling, as he does often when he is alone. I will venture it, and go in ; perhaps I can have a word with him." Hesitating, he approached the door, and listened again, then took courage, and opened it quickly. A bent figure, with a rumpled hat on his head, was sitting in a leather arm-chair, lonely, in the dusky room ; the head was nodding forward, and muttering unintelligible words. How much was Hirsch Ehrenthal altered within the last year ! When he drove back the last time from the baron's estate, he was a plump, respectable-looking man—what might be called a well-conditioned man—who knew how to put his diamond pin into his frill, so as to be thought grand by the ladies. The head which was now nodding in nervous weakness, was that of an old man, and a beard was growing on the wrinkled face, which for weeks had not been touched by a razor. He was a picture of miserable decay, where the mind had outrun the body on the road to second childhood.

The agent stopped at the door, startled at the appearance of his former employer, who, absorbed in his thoughts, only half belonged to the world of business. At length, approaching nearer, he began, "I wish to speak to you, Herr Ehrenthal."

The old man continued to nod his head, and answered, with trembling voice, "I am Hirsch Ehrenthal ; what have you to say to me ?"

"I wish to speak to you about an important business," continued Itzig.

"I hear," said Ehrenthal, without looking up. "If it is an important affair, why do you not speak ?"

"Don't you know me, Hirsch Ehrenthal ?" shouted out Itzig, bending down to the old man.

The figure in the arm-chair looked up with weary eyes, and stared at the other ; at last, he recognized him ; he raised himself violently up from his seat, and stood there with outstretched neck. Still his head continued to nod, but his eyes rested on the agent, with a look full of fear and hatred. "What do you want in my office ?" he cried out, with trembling voice. "How dare you come before my eyes ? Begone, you wretch !"

Itzig continued standing. "Don't shriek like a cock. I don't

hurt you ; I wish to talk to you about great affairs, if you will be quiet, as a man of your age ought to be."

"It is Itzig," the old man muttered between his teeth ; "he wishes to talk about great affairs. I am to be quiet. How can I be quiet," he burst out again, "when I see you before my eyes? You are my enemy. You have ruined me here, you have ruined me there. You have been to me as the bad fiend with the sword, on which hang drops of gall, and I must needs tremble when I look at you."

"Be calm," said Itzig, "and when you are calm, listen to me."

"Is his name Itzig?" again mumbled the old man between his teeth. He calls himself Itzig ; but when he walks in the street, the dogs howl at him.—I will not see you," he cried out, raising himself again. "Begone! The sight of you makes me sick. I would rather have to do with a spider than with you."

Veitel replied with resignation, "Let bygones be bygones, Ehrenthal ; let us say no more about them. You have acted ill by me, and I by you ; it is about equal between us."

"He has dined every Sunday at my house," the old man grumbled on.

"As you think of that, I will too," exclaimed Veitel. "Yes, I have eaten at your table, and therefore I am sorry that we have become enemies. I have always felt a great affection for your family."

"You have shown your affection, young Itzig. It is you that have come into my house, and have struck me down now, before I am in my grave ; it is you who make me every day CHIBBUT HAKKEFER."

"What rubbish you are talking," exclaimed Veitel, angrily. "Why do you always speak as if you were dead, and I the bad spirit with the sword? I am come to bring you a happy life, not death. I will make you respected again by our people, and that those who meet you in the street shall take their hats off to you, as they did before Hirsch Ehrenthal became a dotard."

Ehrenthal mechanically took his hat off, and put it on again. His hair had turned white.

"There shall be friendship between you and me," continued Itzig, persuasively, "and your affairs shall be as mine. I have sent more than one of your kinsmen to tell you what I want from you, and your wife has often told you the same thing. I shall become a man who deals with the best persons. I can show you that I possess a certain capital which is larger than you imagine. Why should we not unite our money together? If you will give me your daughter Rosalie, I will treat you as a son."

Old Ehrenthal gave the wooer a look, in which a spark of his old cunning flashed through his idiotic weakness. "If you wish to have my daughter Rosalie," he answered, "you shall hear the only question I have to put to you: What can you give me if I give you Rosalie?"

"I can show you the amount at any time."

"You may reckon up much, but I will ask of you only one thing. If you will restore me my son Bernhard, you shall have my daughter. If you cannot bring back my Bernhard from his grave, I say to you as long as I have a tongue in my mouth, Begone! Begone from my office, begone!" he shrieked out in a sudden fit of rage, and clenched his fists at the wooer. Veitel retreated hastily into the shadow of

the door; the old man sat down again in his chair, and threatened and chattered to himself.

Itzig stood at the door watching him, until the lamentations of the old man ceased, and only indistinct words dropped from his lips; then he shrugged his shoulders, and left the room.

As he ascended the stairs to pay his visit to the ladies, he kept on shrugging his shoulders, to show his contempt for the weak old man. Then he pulled the bell, and was ushered in by the cook with the rumpled cap with the most familiar smiles.

Meanwhile Eugene rushed helplessly from one officer's room to another. He went into Feroni's—the oysters were uneatable, the Burgundy tasted like ink. Again he ran about the streets; great drops of perspiration stood on his forehead. Thus the poor youth spent the day. At last he sat down dead tired at a confectioner's, and thought once more whether no resource was left. If Wohlfart were but here! But it was too late to inform him. The agents had deluded Eugene with promises of delay, and it was only yesterday evening, they had both written to him at the same time, that their claims had been transferred to Herr Itzig. Though it was too late to write to Wohlfart, that sure friend might have an acquaintance in the town. When Anthony recommended young Sturm, he had said the father is a safe man, and not without means. From the father of a hussar who was in his father's service, he might, perhaps, obtain money, if the old man had any to spare. That was the question. He asked for a directory: he found John Sturm, packer, Inselgasse, No. 17. He took a droschky, and drove there. He knocked, and a loud "Come in" was the answer. The distressed officer crossed the packer's threshold.

The father Sturm was sitting lonely by his beer jug, a small daily paper in his hand—so small, that anybody might see it was neither written, nor printed, nor published for him. "A hussar!" exclaimed Sturm; and so great was his astonishment, that he remained sitting on his bench. The officer, too, was struck at the sight of the colossal figure, staring at him with his large eyes wide open; then, for a few moments, they looked at each other.

"To be sure," said the giant, "it is a hussar of my Karl's regiment; the coat tells it and the lace. Welcome, comrade!" and he rose. He only then discovered that it was gold lace. "By Jove, it is an officer!"

"My name is Eugene von Rothsattel," began the lieutenant. "I am an acquaintance of Herr Wohlfart."

"Of Herr Wohlfart and my son Karl!" said Sturm, eagerly. "Please sit down, sir; it is a great pleasure and honour for me." He fetched a chair, and in his zeal set it down before Eugene so that the room shook. Eugene was going to sit down. "Not yet," said old Sturm; "I must first dust it; the uniform might suffer. Since my Karl has been gone, it has been rather dusty here." He wiped and polished the chair with a handkerchief for his guest. "There, sir: now allow me to sit down in front of you. Do you bring me news of my little one?"

"None," answered Eugene, "except that he is very well, and that my father is well satisfied with his services."

"Good!" exclaimed Sturm, with a smile all over his face, and tapping with his fingers on the table, in such a way as to cause a kind of earthquake in the room. "I knew that your father would be content with him; I would have written that on stamped paper. He was always a practical boy, even when he was no bigger than that," and he marked with his hand on the table a measure of size, so small as is not granted to any mortal man, even the first day of his visible life.

"But can he do everything," he inquired further, anxiously, "on account of—you know?" He held out his large fingers to the lieutenant, and moved them expressively in the air. "Middle-finger and ring-finger—ah, it was a great misfortune, sir!"

Eugene remembered the unlucky accident. "But he has got over it," he said, puzzled at the part that the fatherly feeling of the giant made him act. "What brings me to you is a request."

"A request?" said Sturm, laughing. "You may order, my lord baron, and that is no figure of speech. Every member of the family in which my Karl is bailiff has the right to order old Sturm; that's my plain opinion," he concluded, passing his hand over the table.

"To come to the point, Herr Sturm," continued Eugene, "I am obliged to make a large payment to-morrow, and want money for it. The affair came upon me so suddenly, that I had no time to write to my father. I know no one here, to whom I can apply with so much confidence as the father of our bailiff."

Sturm bent forward, and in his delight gave the officer a slap on the knee. "That was honestly spoken. You are a gentleman who keeps to his family, and does not run to strangers, when he can get assistance from his own people. You want money, then? My Karl is bailiff to your father; my Karl has money, so it is all right. How much do you require? is it a hundred, or two hundred? The money is there."

"I am almost afraid to mention the sum to you," said Eugene, abashed. "It is nineteen hundred thalers."

"Nineteen hundred thalers!" repeated the giant, amazed. "That is a large capital—a fortune; what people would call a business."

"Indeed it is, Herr Sturm," proceeded Eugene sadly: "and since you are so kind to me, I am heartily sorry that it is so much. I am ready to give you a bond for it, and to pay you as much interest as you desire."

"Well," said Sturm, thoughtfully, "as for interest, we will not talk of that; you settle that with my Karl. But with regard to the bond, that is a good idea of yours. A bond is for life and death: you and I don't want it between one another. But I may die before my time—that would not signify, as you would still be there—who would know of the business; but you might die also, which I do not at all fear—on the contrary," he added soothingly. "But still you might die, and then my Karl would want your signature to enable him to come forward and say, 'My poor young baron has written this, therefore it must be paid.'"

"Then you will be kind enough to lend me the money?"

"It is no kindness," said Sturm, chidingly; "it is my duty, as it is a matter of business, and my dwarf is your bailiff."



Eugene looked at the smiling face of the giant, much touched. "But, Herr Sturm, I want the money to-morrow."

"Of course," answered Sturm; "that's just what pleases me. Come, my lord baron." He took the light, and led him into his bed-room. "I beg your pardon, it looks untidy here. I am a single man, and all day long at my work. See, here is my money-chest." He took out an iron box from under the bed. "It is safe from thieves," he said, proudly; "no one in the town can move this from its place but me, nor can anybody open it, for the lock is a masterpiece of the father of my late wife; only a few besides me can lift the lid, and if a lot of them were to come, they would find the work too hard for them. Don't you think that the money is safe here from sharpers and such folk?" he said, triumphantly. He was on the point of putting the key into the lock. "Stop!" he cried, "only one more question: I trust in you, my lord baron, as I do in my Karl, but are you really the young baron?"

Eugene could hardly help smiling. He put his hand in his pocket and said, "Here are my papers."

"I am much honoured," said Sturm, and took the papers carefully, read the name attentively, looked at the signature below, and inclining his head, returned it, with two fingers, respectfully.

"And here," continued Eugene, "I have, accidentally, a letter from Wohlfart in my pocket."

"To be sure!" cried out Sturm, looking at the direction; "this is his own hand."

"And here is his signature," said Eugene.

"Yours most devotedly, Wohlfart," read the giant. "Ah! when he writes thus you may rely that it is true. So now the business is done," he continued, and opened the chest; "here is the money; nineteen hundred thalers there." He lifted five large bags out of the chest, took them easily with one hand, and handed them to Eugene. "There are a thousand."

Eugene endeavoured in vain to hold the bags.

"Ah!" said the giant, "I see I must carry them to the carriage for you. The rest I must give you in shares. These, of course, you know, are worth rather less than a hundred thalers."

"Never mind," said Eugene.

"No," said the giant; "only you make a remark upon it in the bond. So the business is happily settled." He locked the box again and pushed it under the bed.

Eugene returned with a light heart into the room. "Now I will take the bags to your carriage," said Sturm.

"There is still the bond," remarked Eugene.

"Right," added the giant, nodding; "everything must be regular. Try whether you can write with my great pen. If I had known I was to receive so grand a visit, I should have brought a better from Herr Schroeter's."

Eugene drew up a bond, whilst Sturm was sitting opposite to him with his beer jug, looking at him with great satisfaction. Then he accompanied him to the carriage, and said at parting, "Give my hearty greetings to my little one and Herr Wohlfart. I had promised Karl to go to him at Christmas with a Christmas-tree, but my health is shaken. I am past forty-nine."

Some days later Eugene wrote to Anthony, and imparted to him briefly, that he had borrowed nineteen hundred thalers from father Sturm, for which he had given a bond. "Try to arrange something," the letter concluded; "of course my father is to know nothing of it. What a good-hearted, odd chap that old Sturm is; think of something that I can bring to his son, the hussar, when I come to stay with you."

Anthony threw the letter indignantly on the table. "It is impossible to help them; the Principal is right. He has wasted his money in bracelets for some opera-dancer, or at dice with his dissolute companions, and pays his usurious debts with the hard-gained earnings of an honest man." He called Karl into his room.

"I have often felt sorry that I have drawn you into this mess; to-day I feel deeply how wrong it has been; I am ashamed to tell you what has happened. Young Rothsattel has taken advantage of your father's kind heart to borrow nineteen hundred thalers from him."

"Nineteen hundred thalers from my old man!" exclaimed Karl, astonished. "Has my Goliath so much money to lend? He always made it appear to me that he did not know how to save."

"A portion of your inheritance is given away in exchange for a worthless bond. The matter is more provoking from the indifference with which the thoughtless borrower treats it. But did not your father write to you about it?"

"He!" exclaimed Karl; "that he certainly never will. I am only displeased that you are so much vexed at the occurrence. I beg of you to make no noise about it. You know best how many clouds are hanging over this house. Don't increase the parents' grief on my account."

"Being silent in this case, is the same as becoming an accomplice in a roguish trick. Write at once to your father, that he is never again to be so kind; for it is possible that the young gentleman may return again to him."

Anthony then wrote to Eugene:—"An arrangement of your debt is impossible without speaking to your father, and even in that case I do not know how it can be covered. I do not conceal from you that I think your borrowing from the father of the bailiff Sturm was very wrong. You and your father owe much to the self-sacrificing activity of the son, and the small pay that he receives, under the present circumstances, is a very insufficient reward. I must therefore beg of you to procure for the packer Sturm as much security as can be given to him: this security is your father's acknowledgment of the debt. I think you will agree with me that it is most fitting for you yourself to make the communication to the baron. I beg you will not delay it till your visit, as every week that this transaction remains unsettled appears to me as the prolongation of a deception that is unworthy of you."

Anthony said to Karl, "If he does not confess to his father, I shall inform the baron of the bond in his presence, the first day of his visit. Don't object; you are exactly like your father."

The consequence of this letter was that Eugene wrote no more to Anthony, and his next letter to his father contained some vague expression in which he insinuated that Wohlfart was a person to whom they were under some obligation, but unfortunately such people became presumptuous, and assumed a dictatorial tone which was

insufferable, and that the best thing would be to get rid of him as soon as they decently could. This view was quite to the baron's mind, and he commended it highly. "Eugene had always a sound judgment. I also am longing for the day when I shall be able to overlook the farm in person, and dismiss our Herr Wohlfart."

The baroness, who had read the letter to her husband, replied, "You would certainly miss Wohlfart very much, if he should ever leave us." She then folded up the letter, and hid it in her pocket.

Leonora, however, was unable to control her indignation. She left the room silently, and went to look for Anthony in the farm-yard.

"What is the matter between you and Eugene?" she called out to him.

"Has he complained of me?" asked Anthony.

"Not to me," answered Leonora, "but in his letter to my parents, he speaks of you in a way that ill becomes him."

"Perhaps it is an accident," answered Anthony, "or a fit of ill-temper that will pass over."

"No, it is more, and I will know it."

"If it is more, you must learn it from himself."

"Then, Wohlfart, Eugene has done something wrong, and you know of it."

"Whatever it may be," answered Anthony, seriously, "it is not my secret, otherwise I would not conceal it from you. I beg you to believe I have acted honourably towards your brother."

"What I believe can be of no use to you," said Leonora. "I am to know nothing, I understand nothing, and can do nothing in this sorrowful time but get into a rage when they are unjust to you."

"Often I feel the responsibility laid on me by your father's illness as a dangerous burthen. His ill-humour sometimes turns naturally against me, when I am obliged to break to him anything disagreeable; that is unavoidable, but I shall have the courage to go through many painful hours, so long as you and the baroness are not shaken in your conviction, that I always act to the best of my power for your interests."

"My mother understands what you are to us," said Leonora; "she never speaks of you to me, but I see it in her countenance when she looks at you across the table. She has always known how to hide her thoughts, her sorrows, and her cares; now she shuts herself up more than formerly, even from me. I see her pure image as from behind a white veil. She has become so weak, bodily, that the tears come into my eyes sometimes when I am looking at her. She always speaks well and reasonably, but she takes no interest in anything, and when she smiles at my words, it appears to me as if even mirth gave her inward pain."

"Yes," I fear it is so," said Anthony, sorrowfully.

"She lives only to take care of my father; what she suffers inwardly no one knows—not even her daughter; she is like an angel, Wohlfart, who only unwillingly lingers upon earth. I can be of little use to her—I feel that; I am awkward, and want all that makes my mother so charming; her self-control, her quiet manner, and her beautiful form. In consequence of my father's illness, the frivolity of my brother, and my mother's reserve toward me—in spite of all her

love—I am very lonely, Wohlfart.” She leant against the edge of the well and wept.

“Perhaps it is best for you that you should be so,” said Anthony, with warm sympathy; “you have a strong character, and I believe your feelings are very vehement.”

“I can be very violent,” said she, with tears, “and then again very petulant.”

“You grew up free from sorrow, in happy circumstances, and your life was a holiday.”

“The lessons, now, have been severe enough,” she replied.

“I think you were in danger, with your disposition, of becoming a little wild and overbearing.”

“I am afraid I was so.”

“Now you have gone through heavy trials, and the present looks very dark; and if I may tell you my mind, dear young lady, I think you will find here exactly what the baroness gained in the great world—steadiness and self-knowledge. It seems to me sometimes as if you had already changed a little.”

“I was formerly a most insupportable romp, was I not?” asked Leonora, laughing through her tears, and looking at Anthony, in spite of her honesty, with girlish archness.

Anthony could hardly restrain himself from telling her how lovely she looked at that moment; but the good youth struggled with himself bravely, and said as coolly as possible, “It was not so very bad, dear Fraulein.”

“And do you know what you are?” said Leonora, jestingly; “you are, as Eugene writes, a little schoolmaster.”

“Then that is what he has written,” exclaimed Anthony.

Leonora suddenly became serious. “Don’t let us speak of him. When I heard his letter read, I came here to tell you that I trust in you more than in any person on earth, except, perhaps, my good mother; and that as long as I live nothing will shake my faith in you; that I am convinced you are the only friend we have in our distress, and that I would beg your pardon on my knees, if any one should offend you secretly, in word or only in thought.”

“Leonora! dear Fraulein,” cried Anthony, delighted, “pray say no more.”

“And besides, I was going to tell you how much I admire the steady way in which you pursue your course among us, and get on with everybody without losing your authority; and I feel that you alone are the only person who can introduce order and a better state of things on this property. This has been lying on my heart, and now you know it, Wohlfart.”

“I thank you, Fraulein,” exclaimed Anthony; “your words have given me a happy day; but I am not so strong and steady as you believe, and when I look at this estate and think of what must be done here, I feel every day more, that I am not the person who can improve it thoroughly. If I could ever wish that you were not the daughter of the baron, but a man, it is when I walk over the property.”

“You are right,” cried Leonora, “that is my old regret; our former bailiff used to tell me the same thing. When I am sitting over my embroidery, and see you and Herr Sturm go into the fields, I get burning hot, and fling the useless rubbish on one side. I can

do nothing but eat, and spend money on laces, and even that not well, as mamma says. But you must put up with the awkward Leonora, as a good friend," said she, looking at him with confidence.

"For many years I have felt your friendship as a great happiness," Anthony said, much moved; "always, up to this hour, it has been the joy of my heart, to consider myself as your faithful friend."

"And so it shall continue between us," rejoined Leonora. "Now I am quiet again, and don't be vexed with Eugene's follies, neither will I." Thus they separated, like innocent children, who have a secret pleasure in telling each other what passion seeks to hide.

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### CHAPTER XIII.

THE enmity between Pix and Specht had again blazed out; but this time Specht did not stand alone, the quarrel was on his side, for Specht's feelings were injured in a point which had been approved of by them, and consecrated by their song. Herr Specht was in love. This state was not unusual with this lively gentleman, for one may say, that the chief support of his life was the eternal flickering flame of love, which, like the fire of Vesta, burnt as a poetical flame, round which the practical kitchen-pots of daily life, the thoughts of marriage and housekeeping, never had a place. Herr Specht's love was eternal; but the goddess for whom the flame burnt was often changed. Every lady within his horizon had, one after the other, the honour of being adored by him; even the aunt had for some time been the object of his dreams, in the days when the sorrowful history of the exalted, though no longer young, Sappho had moved his heart.

But this time Herr Specht's feelings had a solid foundation; he had discovered a young lady, the wealthy possessor of a house, and widow to a fur-trade, with plump cheeks, and a pair of gentle hazel eyes. He pursued her to the theatre and public gardens, and wandered about before her windows, and did whatever his imagination could suggest to move her heart. He disturbed the calm of her retired existence, by numberless anonymous notes, in which the unknown expressed, in prose and verse, his intentions of exchanging the worthlessness of this life for the unknown future, if she rejected him. In the local "Advertiser" appeared, to the astonishment of the public, amongst fresh caviar, shell-fish, and servants seeking for places, numberless poetical performances, in which the young woman's Christian name, "Adele," was to be found in large letters either at the head of the verses, or as an acrostic. At last Herr Specht could not refrain from confiding his feelings to the quartet. First, he opened his heart to Herr Liebold, one evening when the bass in a brotherly way had assisted him in warbling fiery love songs; he ventured to avow to him, also, that he was the author of the much-talked-of Adele poems. The basses were much astonished that so extraordinary an event should have occurred in their office. It is true that they had often laughed with others at these poems, whilst Specht was secretly groaning at the criticisms of the office; but when they now learnt that one of themselves was the author, their *esprit de corps* was aroused, and they listened with pleasure to his confessions. The case was judged

by them as not unpractical; the widow was pretty, she possessed a house, and, as was reported, a respectable fortune besides. Therefore they determined upon granting their colleague their co-operation in a serenade. The watchmen before the house of the widow received some four groschen pieces; the serenaders came, one side of the window in the widow's bed-room was opened, and something white appeared for a moment. Specht was floating in happiness; and since this state of mind does not make men silent, committed the imprudence of making mysterious allusions to the other colleagues also. Thus it was that Pix became acquainted with the state of things.

And now a remarkable game of cat and mouse ensued in the local "Advertiser." Mysterious advertisements appeared, by which a certain Herr S—— was appointed to all the most remote parts of the town, to meet some one who was dear to his heart. Specht rushed regularly to the place, but never found her whom he sought; instead of which, he met in the course of his search with serious discomforts: he suffered much from cold and wind; he was snubbed by various unknown ladies whom he addressed; a bootmaker's boy, whom he mistook for his sweetheart in disguise, flung the end of a cigar in his face; in a blind alley, from the manner in which he pried about, he was taken for a spy of the police, and was maliciously abused. Of course, on his side, he put into the local paper veiled but bitter complaints of the treachery of the lady; the result of which was excuses, and hints at new opportunities. But he never found her whom he sought.

This went on for some weeks, till Specht, from these incessant tricks of fate, got into a state of excitement that frightened even the basses.

One morning Pix was standing as usual in the entrance-hall, when a nice plump lady with hazel eyes came in, in a fur cloak, and inquired angrily for Herr Schroeter.

"Herr Schroeter is not at home," said Pix; "can I be of any service to you?" He had laid the black brush on one side, and as the stranger hesitated to speak, he invited her by a commanding wave of his hand to come out of the bustle of servants and casks into the open store-room. His quiet dignity impressed the lady so much, that she entered, and Pix, making a slight bow, said, condescendingly, "Do you wish anything from our Firm?"

"I wish to speak to the head of the Firm," recommenced the lady.

"I am here in his place," said Pix, with the look of a general.

The stranger looked at him nervously, and at length began: "I come to complain of a gentleman of your office. For a long time I have been the object of jokes and importunities, which put me in danger of becoming the talk of the town. I receive letters and poems from an unknown hand, and my name is the subject of improper jokes in the "Daily Advertiser." I have learnt that the originator of these scandalous proceedings is in your office, and I require that he should be punished."

Pix guessed at once the truth: he put his hand into his waistcoat, and asked, "Can you tell me the name of the gentleman?"

"I do not know his name," said the widow; "he is tall, and has curly hair."

"A thin figure and a high nose?" inquired Pix. "Good, madam;

from this day forth you shall be molested no more; you shall have perfect satisfaction—I answer for it.”

“But I should like for Herr Schroeter himself—” began the lady in fur, again.

“It is better you should not: the young man has behaved in a manner for which I can find no words; but your kind heart will tell you that his intention was certainly not to annoy you; his conduct was awkward and without tact, that is his crime; but the poor man is really seized with a serious feeling for you. Since I have the honour of knowing you, I think it quite natural;” he bowed again: “I repeat, I condemn him, but think it quite natural.”

The pretty widow was abashed, and did not know how to answer the grand gentleman.

“At the same time,” Pix continued, “I have the honour of begging your pardon in the name of our Firm: our Firm must greatly lament having occasioned you one unpleasant moment. It would make us very happy if the kindly feeling which I read in your face would induce you to pardon our Firm, and, above all, the culprit.”

“It is certainly not my intention to make others answerable for the improper conduct of one person.”

“I thank you with my whole heart for your amiability,” continued Herr Pix, triumphantly, “and I beg your pardon besides for having shown you into this place: I did not know to whom I had the honour of speaking. This is the little magazine for my daily supplies.”

“Your daily supplies,” repeated the lady, astonished at the extent of the gentleman’s daily supplies.

Pix put his hand into a barrel of coffee, and let a handful of the berries fall back carelessly like gold rain into the barrel. “Perhaps you will find some things here that may be interesting to you as a house-keeper,” he added, pointing out his wares with a light wave of his hand.

The pretty fur-merchant’s widow burst forth into civil admiration. Herr Pix made her remark some sorts of superior quality, and pointed out the vexatious stones in the Domingo, and the green tinge of the cargo from Java. The lady listened, astonished and captivated, to the economical lecture which the gentleman delivered so condescendingly.

“Our Firm would be most happy if they could be allowed to send you a small token of their respect,” Pix said, finally, with a respectful bow. “Permit me to send you specimens of some qualities that will please you.”

“It is impossible for me to accept, Herr —,” answered the lady, firmly.

“My name is Pix. I beg you not to make any words about this trifle: it is true that we have long since given up retail business, but it is understood that we keep an account open with some few patronesses of our Firm. If, in future, you should be inclined to make any little purchases, I shall be happy to charge it to you at cost price; and as concerns that gentleman, I repeat, you shall have perfect satisfaction—I myself will see to it.”

“I am very much obliged to you, sir,” said the lady, with a friendly smile, and departed from the Firm quite propitiated.

Pix went into the office and took Specht on one side. “You have done a pretty piece of business,” said he, severely. “Do you know that you were threatened with a thunderstorm that would easily have

knocked you down from your desk? The young widow has been here, and was bent upon making a complaint against you; she is furious with you. How could you venture to make a respectable lady the object of such vulgar worship in the 'Advertiser?' You should be ashamed of yourself, Specht," he exclaimed, with great disapprobation.

Specht was struck dumb with terror. "She began with me in the 'Advertiser,'" he said, wofully; "she made appointments, first at the theatre, then at the swan house, then in the public gardens, and then even on the tower to enjoy the view."

"Fie," said Pix, with virtuous indignation; "do you not see that some wag has humbugged you? The lady is most unhappy at your conduct. I tell you, in confidence, she has been crying about you." Specht was wringing his hands. "I did everything to calm her: I promised her in your name that you would from this day abstain from writing in the 'Advertiser,' and from all other attacks upon her tranquillity. Mind that; if not, Herr Schroeter shall know the whole story."

"I cannot acquiesce in that," said the unhappy Specht; "you don't know what I feel."

"Feel what you please," said Pix, with crushing severity; "but you must desist from printing one line about Adele, otherwise you will have to deal with me." So saying, he walked angrily out, leaving Specht in a state much resembling the delightful condition of a man who has been hung.

While Specht was advising with the quartet what was to be done in this situation, Pix was acting. Towards evening, a servant carried a large packet, with kind compliments, to the house of the widow, and Herr Pix had this parcel of goods conscientiously put down to his own account. The same evening, he waited on the widow, and reported to her that the culprit had been severely rebuked, and that he trusted the tranquillity of her days and nights would be restored. The following Sunday he drank tea at the widow's, who had invited a friend as a chaperone. A month later, the hazel eyes of the lady and this tyrannical being had become so intimate, that he went in his best attire and proposed to her. This proposal was accepted; Herr Pix became a bridegroom, and made up his mind to start the fur business again, in spite of moths and hair, and to make himself the head of it.

We must say, to do him justice, that he felt it his duty to impart this state of things first to Herr Specht, and to say a few words that might be taken as an apology. "Chance has decided it so," he said; "be reasonable, Specht, and compose yourself; you must consider, at all events, that it is one of your colleagues who has married her."

"But not I," said Specht, quite out of his wits; "it is no consolation to me that it is you, for I fear you have acted perfidiously towards me in this affair."

"I tell you what," said Pix, repentingly, "act like a good fellow, as you are at heart, and fall at once in love with another lady. That will be no trouble to you."

"You think so, do you?" cried out Specht, indignantly.

"Of course it is quite easy," said Pix, "if you only set about it in good earnest. And we will remain friends as of old: you will not fail to be at my wedding."

"And that into the bargain?" screamed out Specht.

"You shall make all the arrangements for the nuptial eve—you



are first-rate in such matters—and you are to be the bridesman. Only make haste and find another to whom you can write verses, and never mind whether the name is Adele or Geneveva.”

But this was by no means a matter of indifference to Herr Specht; he was furious at the treachery of his antagonist Pix, and enjoyed the melancholy pleasure of having, on this occasion, the whole office on his side, and Herr Pix was condemned as a cold egotist by every room in the lower house. But time poured its soothing balm over the wounds of Herr Specht's heart; the widow happened to possess a niece whose eyes were blue and hair auburn, and Herr Specht began to find, first, that her freckles were interesting and her manners charming, and at last began to entertain the idea of becoming Herr Pix's nephew by marriage.

The merchant was sitting in an arm-chair absorbed in reflection; at last he turned to his sister, “Fink has disappeared again.”

Sabine let her skein drop. “Disappeared? in America?”

“An agent of his father's was to-day in the office; he told me that a fresh difference had arisen between father and son; and this time I fear Fink is more in the right than the Firm. Fink suddenly gave up the direction of affairs, dissolved by his strong measures a large company that had been established by his uncle, and gave up his share in the inheritance to his father, and has disappeared. According to doubtful intelligence from New York, he has gone into the wild country in the interior.”

Sabine listened with great anxiety, but did not say a word. Her brother also remained silent. “He was made of good stuff,” he said, at last; “these times require energy like his. Pix also is leaving us: he is wooing a wealthy widow, and wishes to establish himself. I shall take Balbus in his stead, but he will not replace him.”

“No,” said Sabine, sadly.

“There is a void in our house,” continued the brother, “and I feel that my strength does not increase. The last few years have been laborious; one gets accustomed to faces, and even to the weaknesses of men. Nobody can tell how difficult it is to the head of a house to loosen the ties which connect him with those who have been working with him. There are few to whom I have become so accustomed as to Pix; he will be a great loss to me, I am becoming old. I am becoming old, and our house is becoming empty. In my dark hours I see you alone in the house, when I shall be taken away from you—you will be left alone. My wife and child are gone. On your blooming youth I have placed all my hopes; I have thought of your husband and your children, my poor dear: meanwhile I have grown old, and I see you by my side with your gentle smile and wounded heart, active, sympathizing, and yet alone, without any great joy or hope.”

Sabine laid her head on her brother's breast and wept quietly. “One whom you have lost was dear to you,” she whispered.

“Don't speak of him, don't think of him,” said her brother, gloomily: “even if he came back from there, he would be lost to us!” He passed his hand over his sister's head, seized his hat, and left the room.

“And he himself is always thinking of Wohlfart,” exclaimed the aunt, from the window niche; “only to-day he was cross-examining old Sturm about Karl and the estate; I don't understand the man.”

"I understand him," sighed Sabine, and she sat down to her work again. The aunt replied, sulkily, "You are both alike, there is no use talking to you about certain things." She then left the room indignantly.

Sabine continued sitting alone. The fire was crackling in the stove, and the pendulum of the clock moved in its own uniform measure. "Ever on so—yes—ever on so," hummed the clock. Gently the flame of life crackled in the space so firmly enclosed within these walls, lighted every morning, and burned out every night. The portraits of her parents were looking down on the last child of their family with imperturbable seriousness, motionless for many years. Thus her youth was passing away, gravely, calmly, motionless, like the pictures on the wall. Sabine bent her head and listened: hark! little spirit-like steps in the corners of the room, and hark! a merry laugh from a child's mouth, and the tripping came nearer, and a curly head was laid coaxingly on her lap, and two little arms stretched out to clasp her neck. She bent down and kissed the air before her lips, and listened again to the sweet tones that filled her heart with transport, and brought tears of joy into her eyes. Alas! her hand caught nothing but empty air, and nothing was real but the tears that fell into her empty lap.

Thus she sat for a long time, until the evening twilight pervaded the room. The pendulum of the clock moved wearily, the fire in the stove burnt down, the last sparks faded away, the outlines of the figures on the walls grew more and more indistinct, one head after another disappeared in the darkness, the room became darker and darker, lonely, gloomy, and without light; night surrounded her closer and closer, like the lid of a coffin it veiled her head and limbs.

The mallet of old Sturm fell merrily on the hoops of the casks. Strong and heavy sounded each blow through the courtyard and house. Sabine rose. "It was to be so," she exclaimed, "twice I have feared and hoped, it has been twice a deception, now it is over. He alone to whom I am everything remains to me. I cannot meet him with the husband he hoped for, and no child's arm will twine round his neck. Yes, it will continue to go on with us as it has done, still quieter, and still more lonely. But he shall have me and my whole life. My brother, you shall not have the pain of feeling that your life and mine are joyless."

She seized the key of her work-basket, and hastened to her brother's room.

Meanwhile, the aunt resolved upon paying Herr Bauman a visit. There had long existed a secret understanding between them; fate had made him her neighbour at dinner; when she looked back mentally at the succession of her neighbours at that, which was the great event of the day, she came to the conclusion, that the succession had gone on gradually declining in gay humour, as much as it had increased in Christian piety. Fink was godless, but very amusing; Wohlfart held a certain medium between piety and gaiety; Bauman was the most pious and the most silent; "What does one not live to see!" thought the good aunt. The conversation between the aunt and Herr Bauman was never exciting, but it was edifying, for she set great value on the Sunday service, and on Monday they always exchanged their remarks on the last sermon. But besides the theological discussion, there was another tie between them, this tie was Anthony. The aunt could not get over what she called the unnatural parting. She was uncertain on whom to lay the blame of this sudden disturbance which had come over Anthony, on the Principal or on his clerk. She had a firm conviction that Anthony's departure had been unnecessary, unreasonable, and objectionable to all parties, and she

laboured in all sorts of roundabout ways to bring him back to the office, as far as tender hints and womanly persuasion can effect the decisions of male bears. She had, therefore, in the first period that succeeded Anthony's departure, talked of him and praised him to the merchant and Sabine at every opportunity. But she found she was in the wrong box; the merchant always answered shortly, sometimes roughly, nothing was to be made of him, and Sabine always turned the conversation off, or became quite silent, as long as the aunt continued her panegyric. This, however, did not deceive the aunt, the embroidered curtains had left a dazzling light on her mind, with which she had, ever since that time, with great self-satisfaction, lighted up Sabine. She knew that Herr Bauman was the only one of the clerks who corresponded with Anthony, and that day she determined to come at once to the help of these wrong-headed people. For this purpose, she took a small brochure, which Herr Bauman had lent her, the annual report of some benevolent society, and went to the lower house, assuming an appearance of indifference, and knocking, as if in passing, at Herr Bauman's door, and handing the brochure to him. "Very delightful," she said, "heaven will bless the undertaking;" and she put a small contribution into his hand. "Put me down for a subscription for the future." Herr Bauman thanked her on behalf of the poor; then the aunt, still standing at the door, began, "What news have you had of your friend Wohlfart? he seems to have disappeared from the world, old Sturm also knows nothing about him."

"He is very busy," said the silent Bauman.

"Why! I fancy not more than here. If it was only on account of work, he might have stayed quietly where he was."

"He has difficult duties to fulfil, and performs a charitable work," proceeded Bauman, cautiously.

"Don't talk of charitable work," cried the aunt, absently entering the room, and shutting the door behind her, "here, also, he had a charitable work to do. Nay, don't take it amiss; I never heard of such a thing: he runs away just as he becomes a clever man, and is initiated into all the secrets of the Firm, and is most wanted. There is no excuse for it. If he had set up for himself, or had married, it would have been a different thing; a man wants a home and a business of his own, such things are God's will, and in that case I would not have said a word. But to run out of the office amongst sheep and cattle, Poles and noblemen, it is quite inexcusable; and moreover, from a house where everybody wished him well, where he was a pet in every room. Do you know what I call that, Herr Bauman?" she continued eagerly, while the ribbons of her cap shook; "I call it ungrateful. And what is to become of this house? it is becoming a perfect desert. Fink gone, Jordan gone, Wohlfart gone, and Pix gone; you are the only one left of the good old set, and you cannot do all."

"No," said Bauman, sorrowfully, "and I am also in a bad position. I had fixed last autumn as the farthest period of my stay, and now spring is approaching, and I have not yet followed the voice that calls me."

"Don't talk such nonsense," cried out the aunt, alarmed, "you are not going to leave us?"

"I must," said Herr Bauman, casting down his eyes, "I have received letters from my English brethren, who scold me for my lukewarmness. I fear it is very wrong in me not to have gone sooner, but when I enter the office, and see the heap of letters, and Herr Schroeter's careworn face, and when I consider how difficult the times are, and how unfortunate the Firm has been in losing its best hands, I always feel myself kept back. I wish that Wohlfart would return, the Firm wants him."

"He must return," exclaimed the aunt, "it is his Christian duty and obligation to do so; write that to him. It is not indeed a very cheerful life that we lead here," she continued, confidentially; "he may find it pleasanter there, amongst the Poles there is always rioting and revelry."

"Oh no," answered Herr Bauman, "he is by no means living in revelry. I fear he has much sorrow and many heavy days. There is nothing gay in what he writes."

"Ah! what is that you say?" said the aunt, seating herself, and looking anxiously at Bauman.

Bauman pulled his chair nearer to her, and the two good creatures began, in a whisper, a little charitable tittle-tattle.

"He writes in low spirits, and takes a gloomy view of the times," began Herr Bauman. "He fears new disturbances and bad years."

"God forbid!" exclaimed the aunt; "we have had enough of that already."

"He is living in an unsafe country, amongst bad men, and the police is very imperfect there."

"There are horrid dens of robbers," said the excited aunt.

"And I fear he is badly off for money. In the beginning I sent him, from time to time, some trifles to which he was accustomed, such as our good tea and cigars; but in his last letter he writes that he will become economical, and accustom himself to do without them. He must have very little money," said Bauman, shaking his head; "not above two hundred."

"He is in want!" cried out the aunt; "poor Wohlfart: when you write to him, send him a chest of Pekoe tea and two of our hams."

"Hams to that country?" asked Bauman, doubtfully. "I fancy that pigs will be found there more plentifully than anything else."

"But they are not his," said the aunt. "Listen to me, Herr Bauman: it is your duty as a Christian to write to him at once, and tell him he must come back. The Firm wants him and claims him. I know best how distressed my nephew secretly is at his loss, and how glad he would be to see him again." The last part was a pious lie of the aunt's.

"That is not so evident to me," said Bauman, thoughtfully.

"This very day my niece told her brother how fond we all were of Wohlfart, and what a loss he is to us. If he has duties there, he has duties also here, and they are of older date."

"I will write to him," said Herr Bauman; "but I fear, honoured lady, that it will not be of much use, for it is just when things go badly with him, that he will not abandon the plough, to which he has put his hand for the sake of others."

"He is not a ploughman but a penman," exclaimed the aunt, angrily; "and his place is here. The other business is all nonsense. When he is drinking the best tea, and enjoying a good income, he is not the less doing his duty. And the same I say to you, Herr Bauman, so pray give up your African ideas."

Bauman smiled with a conscious look of superiority; but when the aunt had left the room, he sat down obediently, and wrote to Anthony an account of the whole conversation, and he added how gloomy the life in the house had grown, and how serious the face of the Principal looked, as he passed every morning through the office.

The snow had melted away, snow-water had swollen the brooks, the landscape continued to lie still and colourless, the earth's reviving sap had begun its earliest circulation in the stems of the trees, and had shot

forth the first buds on the shrubs by the brook. The winter floods had carried away the bad bridge, and Anthony was standing near the castle by the water's edge, superintending the workmen who were laying new beams, and nailing planks on them. Leonora was sitting opposite him on the stem of a tree which had been cut down, and looked at him measuring the timber with a foot-rule, and making pencil-marks for the great saw.

"The worst is over," said Leonora, "spring is coming. I already, in my mind's eye, see the trees and turf green; even the gloomy house will look gayer in the bright spring-time than to-day. But I will draw the castle for you as it is now; you shall remember how it looked the first winter which we spent under your protection."

Anthony looked with radiant eyes on the lovely girl before him, and drew the outline of her face with the pencil on a new board.

"You don't hit me off," said Leonora; "you always make my mouth too large, and my eyes too small. Give me the pencil, I can do better. Look, there is your face, your true-hearted face, I know it by heart. Hurrah! the postman!" she exclaimed, threw the pencil aside, and hastened to the castle. Anthony followed her, for the postman, laden with a heavy packet, was to the inhabitants of the castle like a ship steering through the deep sands to bring the good things of the world to a desolate island. At the door of the house the man was freed from his burden by Leonora, who seized, with great satisfaction, the drawing-paper which she had ordered from Rosmin.

"Come here, Wohlfart, let us look for the spot from which I can best draw the castle; the drawing shall hang in your room instead of the old one, which makes my heart ache whenever I look at it. Once you sketched our house, now I do it for you. I will take great pains; you shall see that I can do something."

Thus she talked gaily to Anthony, but he did not hear a word. Impatiently he had opened Bauman's letter; and while he read, his face flushed with emotion. Slowly, absorbed in his thoughts, he went up to his room, and did not come down again.

Leonora picked up the cover which had dropped on the floor. "That is again the handwriting of his friend in the Firm," she said, sorrowfully; "whenever he receives a letter from thence, he becomes gloomy and cold to me." She threw away the cover and hastened to the stable to saddle her confidant, the pony.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

THERE was a weekly market in the small provincial town of Rosmin. From time immemorial the market-day had always been a fête-day for the country-people of the neighbourhood. Five days in the week the peasant had to cultivate his cabbages, or drudge for a severe lord; on Sunday his heart was divided between the Holy Virgin, his family, and the tavern; but the market-day took him beyond the boundary of his village into the great world. Then he felt himself on a footing with the strangers, as a clever man, who has wants and makes acquisitions; he met with old acquaintances, whom he would otherwise have lost sight of; he beheld new things that had come from foreign parts; he heard about other towns and countries, and enjoyed, to his heart's content, what

others had invented for him. On the evening of this day all the news from the wide world circulated in the remote forest village, and in every cottage, and reached every one in the province. So it had been when the Slaves alone were settled in the land—the peasant, a serf under a dirty thatch; the haughty nobleman in his wooden palace. Then, what is now called Rosmin, was an open field; perhaps there may have stood there a chapel with a miraculous image, or a couple of huge trees from heathen times, or the house of some clever proprietor, who saw further than his long-bearded countrymen. In those days the German merchant had crossed the frontier, with his waggons and servants, and under the protection of a crucifix, or of a Slave sword, had opened his chests and offered for sale the products of the industry of his house—cloths, various coloured gowns, smart stockings, necklaces of glass beads and coral, images of saints and sacred vessels, and also, what delighted the country-people, sweet cakes, foreign wine, and fragrant lemons, and had taken in exchange what the country offered him—skins of wolves, furs of moles, honey, corn, cattle, and other things. Ere long the artisan set up his workshop alongside the merchant; the German shoemaker and button-maker arrived, also the tinker and brazier; the tents and huts gradually changed into fixed houses, rising in a square round the market-place, which was wide enough to contain hundreds of loaded Polish waggons. The foreign settlers kept close together; they bought the ground, they purchased municipal privileges from the Slavonian landlord, and they made statutes for themselves, after the pattern of German towns. The new citizens built themselves a guild-hall in the middle of the great square, and, adjoining it, a dozen houses for merchants, and taverns, and so the market-place was closed in. Around the courtyards, the back buildings and alleys, the town wall was erected, and over the two vaulted gates, according to the custom of their home, watch-towers were sometimes built, in the lower part of which the tollman dwelt, and above the watchman. With astonishment it was related in the woods and on the heath, how rapidly the men with the foreign tongue had increased, and that every countryman who passed through their gate had to pay them a copper coin; indeed, even the nobleman, the all-powerful man, had to pay the same. Chance threw many of the Slaves of the neighbourhood amongst the citizens in the town; they established themselves there as artisans, tradesmen, and citizens. This was the beginning of Rosmin, as well as many of the German towns on the old Slavonian soil, and they remain to this day just as they were—the market-places of the great plain, the stations where the produce of Polish agriculture is exchanged for that of German industry, the knots of a firm net, which the German has thrown over the Slave—artificial knots, where numberless threads meet, by which the labourer of the fields is united to other men, to civilization, liberty, and an organized commonwealth.

Still the market-day of Rosmin is the great day for the surrounding country. From early morning hundreds of carts, with hampers loaded with the produce of the fields, drive to the town, and the broad-shouldered peasant and his wife sit perched on the top of the sacks; the serf no longer whips the worn-out horses of his master, but a free-born Slave child guides the fine horses which are bred from the royal studs; and when the carriage of a nobleman drives past him, the lad excites his horses to go faster, and if he is civil perhaps he touches his hat. Along all the roads and cart-tracks, people are walking to the town, the poorer people wheeling their geese on wheelbarrows, and the wives carrying their butter in baskets, with berries and mushrooms underneath, and

perhaps a clandestine hare, which their husbands have knocked over. Before every inn in the suburb, numbers of unharnessed waggons are standing, the door of every tap-room is thronged with people going in and out. In the market-place, waggons of corn are drawn up close together; the large square is covered with round sacks and teams, and horses of every size and colour stand close together; and in the best places, at the outside, the farm-teams of the noblemen. In the square occupied by the waggons, amongst the drivers, heads of horses, and trusses of hay, the Jewish dealer glides like an eel, with samples of corn in each pocket, and asking and answering questions in two tongues. By the side of the white blouse, blue-corded coat, and hat with peacock feather of the Slave, you see the plain, dark-blue of the German settler; amongst them soldiers from the nearest garrison, townspeople, bailiffs, and smart gentlemen of the country nobility. At the corner of the market a *gens-d'arme* sits exalted on his great horse; he, too, is excited to-day, and his voice sounds commanding over the confusion of waggons which block the entrance to the street.

Every shop in the town is wide open, and before the houses the small dealers exhibit their goods on tables and barrels. The yeoman walks thoughtfully past the show-tables, followed by the women of his family, whom he keeps together by brief commands, when they loiter behind, putting their heads together with longing looks where the coloured cottons, handkerchiefs, or necklaces are hanging up, until at length, in spite of his feigned indifference, he bursts out with a cry of admiration, when he comes to a table of steel-ware, or to some harness, or to a fine ham in a butcher's shop. They examine for a long time before the purchase is settled; he bends backwards and forwards for full five minutes the steel blade of a saw, till the tradesman, tired out, takes the article out of his hand, and then at last he resolves to buy; his wife is almost as long knocking on an earthen pot, to be sure that it has no flaw. The enjoyment of bargaining is felt much more here, than where thousands are given at a word. When they meet with a kinsman or acquaintance from another village, a loud greeting ensues, the women draw nearer, the news flies from one mouth to another, till at last the whole troop continue the inspection together. Finally they stop, wearied, before a table, where cut sausages form an agreeable attraction by their marble-like stuffing, where mountains of rolls are piled up, and the ever-welcome herring is lying in the barrel. Here they make their last purchase, and then go to the tavern; they have the white bottle filled, and as they can find no room on the benches, they sit down in some corner of the house and have a prolonged dinner; the bottle goes round, cheeks begin to glow, the gestures become more lively, and the talking louder, the men begin to kiss one another, old enemies look out for a quarrel, and the humming and shouting from every taproom, sounds far into the street. Meanwhile, those who have other business, do it. Whoever has to go to law, attends on this day at the law court; whoever has taxes to pay, usually settles on this day; all the magistrates are very busy, and all the clerks stretch their fingers to-day to make them go quickly; all the constables appear at the office, to give and take information; the wine-shops, too, are full, and Loewenberg, the wine-merchant, does his best business to-day; he has, besides his wine, a great trade in corn and wool; he lends money, and is the confidant of many landed proprietors. In his spacious front parlour the guests are sitting singly, German farming officials, old Polish proprietors, and, perchance, a rich German peasant, who has made a good deal with his cattle. In the back room, there are more distinguished

doings: there the nobility of the province are assembled; many fierce countenances, with heavy features; but also the fine line of face of the Polish aristocracy, powerful men, of noble manners. Here the cork of the champagne-bottle flies to the ceiling; and besides the business of the week, many other things are transacted, which the ears of strangers must not hear. If there are no politics, the dice are perhaps rolling on the table, or a pack of cards flies from some pocket amidst the bumpers, the group gather rapidly together; at one corner of the table there is silence, and only short ejaculations in French are heard. Thus the market-day passes in incessant calling and bargaining, acquiring and enjoying, amidst rattling carts and noisy drivers, till evening spreads its grey cover over the market-place: then the peasant's wife pulls her husband by the coat; she thinks of the earthen vessels that are so easily broken, and of the little children who are now calling for their mother. Then the carts separate and drive off on different roads; the country-lad wears a bunch of spangles in his hat, and incessantly cracks his new-bought whip, and in drunken humour races his horses madly against other teams. Along the cart-tracks the labouring people return to their villages; the wife has tied her pottery on her back; a smart red handkerchief and a piece of gingerbread for the children lie inside, and new pot-ladles and twirling-sticks peep out, and by her side, heavily and unsteadily, walks her husband, the steel saw on his shoulder, in vain endeavouring to maintain the dignity of a householder before strangers. Later, the carriages drive up before the wine-house; the coachmen have long to wait, for the gentlemen also find it difficult to leave the drinking-room. Now it becomes quiet in the weary town; the shop-keeper opens his till, counts and arranges with his wife the money that has been taken, and angrily nails the false coin to the edge of the counter, as a warning to all doubtful characters. Now the gens-d'arme leads his horse into the stable and counts the number of vagabonds, thefts, and rows he has reported that day, by which he hopes to have gained favour. Finally, the watchman goes his round: this evening he casts a careful glance on the taverns, where still some noisy fellows are sitting; and by the dim light of the lamps he looks with dismay at the dirty market-place which in the morning his broom has to clean.

Thus the weekly market had always passed at Rosmin: during the last winter the trade had not been less than usual, but there was uneasiness visible on many faces, principally on those of the gentlemen. From time to time strangers of warlike aspect were seen entering the back room of the wine-merchant's, and the door was locked behind them. Young lads, in striking attire, with square red caps, were walking through the crowd in the streets; sometimes they clapped a countryman on the shoulder, called others by their names, and took them apart from the crowd. Wherever a soldier appeared in his uniform, the people looked at him doubtfully: many avoided him, but others were doubly friendly to him—Germans as well as Poles. The German villagers sat apart in the taverns, and did not mix with the others, and the Poles from the estates of Herr von Tarow drank much, and picked more quarrels than usual. The bailiff from the new farm had at the last market not been able to find a new scythe in the whole town, and the forester complained to Anthony, that he had not been able to scrape together in all the shops as much powder as would last him for a week. Something was hovering in the air—no one ventured to say what it was.

To-day was again market-day at Rosmin, and Anthony drove with a ploughboy to the town. It was one of the first spring days, the sun



shone warmly on the earth which still lay in its winter slumber. Anthony was thinking that now the early flowers ought to be blooming, but that he and the ladies in the castle would see none this year, except those behind the barn at the big farm. It was no time indeed to enjoy flowers, every mind was excited, and all that had for so many years been firm, appeared to totter. The political whirlwind was passing over many countries, the newspapers reported every day unexpected and fearful events, a great war seemed to be impending, property and civilization appeared in danger. He thought of the situation of the baron, and what distress would ensue to him if money became scarce, and land of no value. He thought also of the Firm at the capital, of his place in the office, which, in his secret heart, he considered still as his own, and of the sorrowful letter which Herr Bauman had written to him, telling how gloomy the Principal was, and how quarrelsome the colleagues round Bauman's tea-table.

He was roused from these melancholy thoughts by a noise on the road. A string of gentlemen's carriages drove past him; in the first sat Herr von Tarowsky, who, in passing by, saluted Anthony civilly. Anthony saw, with surprise, that his Jager was sitting on the box as if he were going out hunting: three more carriages rolled by, crowded with gentlemen, even on the steps, and behind the carriages a whole troop of riders came galloping, amongst them the German inspector of Tarow.

"Jasch," called out Anthony to the coachman: "what was that they were hiding in the second carriage as they passed?"

"Rifles," answered the coachman, shaking his head.

The sunny day, succeeding a long time of snow and rain, attracted people from every farm to the town, in small troops they hastened on, few women among them, there were loud shouts from the different parties, and as much animation on the road as is usual only in the evening on the return home. Anthony made the carriage stop at the first inn on the road. The coachman asked, "Is it far from here to the market? how shall we manage about loading the oats?"

"Remain with the horses, and do not enter the town; if I buy anything I shall have it brought here and put into the carriage." He walked hurriedly through the gate into the crowded streets. The town was filled with men, it was swarming with people even up to the gate, so that the corn-waggons could hardly make their way. When Anthony arrived at the market-place, he was struck with the looks of the men. Everywhere flushed faces and excited countenances, many in hunting dresses, and on some were to be seen caps with a foreign cockade. Before the house of the wine-merchant the throng was greatest; there the people were standing wedged together, looking up at the windows, from which coloured banners were floating, Polish colours at the top, and other foreign colours below.

Whilst Anthony was gazing gloomily at the front of the house, a door opened, and Herr von Tarow came out on the stone steps, accompanied by a stranger with a scarf round his waist. Anthony recognized in him the Pole who had once threatened him with a court-martial, and who, some months ago, had inquired for the inspector. A young man marched out of the crowd, and sprang upon the lowest step, crying something aloud in Polish, and waving his cap; loud shouts were the reply, and again all was still. Tarowsky spoke a few words, of which Anthony could not catch anything, as carts were rolling behind him, and the crowd pushing him about. Then the gentleman in the scarf began a violent

speech. He harangued the people long, and was frequently interrupted by loud applause; when he ceased there was a deafening shout and fierce Polish cries. The doors of the house were thrown wide open, and the crowd heaved about like an unquiet sea. One part rushed about and spread themselves over the market-place, others poured into the house, and whoever entered came back in a few minutes with a cockade in his cap, and armed with a scythe spear. In a moment a crowd of scythemen and a troop armed with firearms were drawn up before the house. The number of armed men increased, small divisions of scythemen, led by single riflemen, hastened from the house in all directions across the market-place. Behind Anthony sounded orders and words of command: he turned round and saw single armed men on horseback, with rough words ordering the carters to remove the carts from the market-place. The noise and tumult increased, the countrymen whipped their horses with loud cries, the tradespeople escaped with their wares into the houses, and the shops were closed.

After a few minutes the market wore an alarming aspect; the carts were removed; at the corners of the market sentries were placed, their long spears glittered in the morning sun; in the place itself the doubtful crowd was floating about. Stupified, alarmed, and excited, Anthony hastened through the crowd and gained the opposite side of the market-place. Here was the custom-house, which might be distinguished at a distance by the arms of the state painted on a board hanging by the side of the window. Here again the multitude were pressing on; a guard of scythemen stood before the house. In the distance Anthony saw a man raise a ladder, ascend it, and strike with a hammer on the arms till they came down on the pavement. As they struck the ground, a low sound like a sigh went through the crowd; it had become quiet, so that every sound could be heard. Then a band of drunken rabble pounced with wild shouts on the shield; a rope was bound round it, and with scornful cries it was dragged into the gutter and along the streets.

Anthony was wild with indignation; a flood of stormy passions passed over his heart. "You rogues," he cried aloud, and pushed through the bystanders up to the riotous band. A strong arm seized him round the waist, and a quivering voice said, "Not a step further, Herr Wohlfart; it is their turn to-day, to-morrow it will be ours." Anthony freed himself, and saw by his side the large figure of the constable of Neudorf. In a moment he found himself surrounded by a number of dark-looking men. They wore the blue coats of German peasants; and, with faces full of anger and sorrow, closed him in like a wall. "Let me out," cried Anthony, still quite out of his wits; but again the heavy hand of the constable was laid upon his shoulder, and with moistened eyes the man said, "Spare your life, Herr Wohlfart, it is useless now; we have nothing but our fists, and are in a minority." On the other side his hand was clasped as in a vice; it was the old forester who stood sobbing and groaning near him. "That I should have lived to see this day! Oh, shame! shame!" Then he shook Anthony's hand convulsively, beat his forehead with his own fists, and wept aloud like a child. The wild grief of the old man restored to Anthony a portion of his self-control; he embraced the forester, and held him to his heart. Again discordant shouts were heard close by, and a voice cried out, "Search the Germans, disarm them, no one must leave the market." Anthony gave a hurried look at the men around him, and exclaimed, "We must not suffer this,

my men; that we should be surrounded in a German town like prisoners, and our arms insulted, the villains!"

A drum sounded in the distance. "It is the burghers' drum," said the constable; "the burgher guard of Rosmin have collected; they have rifles!"

"Perhaps all is not lost," cried out Anthony; "I know several persons here who are to be relied upon. Compose yourself, my dear friend," he said, consolingly, to the old forester, "the German country people must not continue dispersed, for nobody knows what we may be able to do. We will at least leave the market together; let us meet here by the fountain; let every one go and call his friends together, and no time must be lost. You go there, constable, and you come with me, smith, of Kunau."

The party separated in two directions. Anthony, followed by the forester and the smith, hastened once more across the market-place. Never had he searched more eagerly, never had they understood one another more quickly. Wherever he found a German, a glance, a quick shake of the hand, and a passing word, was enough. "The Germans assemble together at the well; wait for us," induced even the most timid to join the countrymen.

Anthony stopped with his attendant for a minute amidst the crowd before the wine-merchant's. About fifty scythemen and a dozen rifles with them, were standing before the house; the doors were still wide open, and single individuals entering to fetch weapons. The crowd had drawn back timidly; here and there Poles and Germans, citizens and peasants, were wandering about bewildered. Anthony saw that even the Polish peasants were standing in confused groups, and looking at each other doubtfully. In front of the house some young gentlemen were haranguing the mob, while the smith of Kunau and the forester were giving hints to the Germans.

Anthony seized by the arm a little man, who, in a working coat and sooty face, was pressing into the crowd, and burst out to him, "Locksmith Grobisch, why are you standing here? why do you not hasten to the meeting-place? you are a rifleman and a burgher, will you bear this shame?"

"Ah, Herr Rentmaster," the locksmith said, drawing Anthony aside, "what a misfortune! only think, I was working in my workshop with my hammer, and heard nothing of it: with our work one can hear very little. Suddenly my wife rushed in."

"Will you bear this shame?" exclaimed Anthony, shaking the man violently.

"God forbid, Herr Wohlfart," answered the locksmith. "I command a division of rifles; whilst my wife was fetching my coat, I ran quickly across the market-place, in order to see how many of them there were. You are taller than I am, how many are there that carry weapons?"

"I count fifty scythes," replied Anthony, quickly.

"Not the scythes," said the little man, "those are only the mob who have flocked together, it is the number of muskets that I want."

"A dozen before the door, and perhaps as many in the house."

"We are only about thirty rifles," said the little man, sorrowfully, "and to-day we cannot count upon all."

"Can you get muskets for us?" asked Anthony.

"But few," said the locksmith, shaking his head,

"We have got a number of Germans from the country," continued Anthony, "we will cut our way to the suburb to the 'Red Stag,' there I will keep my people together, and for God's sake send us news by a patrol, and whatever fire-arms you can procure. If we can overthrow the noblemen, the others will disperse of themselves."

"But think of the revenge of these Poles!" said the locksmith, raising his forefinger, "the town will have to pay for it."

"It will have to pay nothing, my master, provided we can expel these crack-brained fellows to-day, to-morrow you will have a garrison. Now, be off, every minute increases the danger."

He pushed the locksmith on, and hastened to the well. There he found the Germans standing together in small groups, the constable of Neudorf came to meet him.

"There is no time to lose," exclaimed the latter, "the others have begun to watch us, and a troop of scythemen is drawing up against us."

"Follow me," cried Anthony, aloud. "Forward, keep close together, and let us get out of the town."

The forester ran from one group to another, and placed the men closer together. Anthony went in front with the constable.

When they came to the corner of the market, the scythemen crossed their weapons before the narrow street, the commander of the post cocked his gun, and called out to Anthony, in a swaggering tone, "Why do you want to go, sir! take arms, my men, to-day is a day of freedom."

He did not proceed, for the forester rushed out and gave him a heavy blow on the ear, so that he reeled on one side, and, in falling, his weapon went off. There were loud cries in the market, the forester seized the musket, and the two scythemen surprised and deprived of their commander, were pushed against the houses by the advancing band, the scythes torn from their hands by the angry men, and broken on the pavement. Without being pursued they pressed on the gate of the town, and there also the enemy's post drew back, and let them pass unmolested. So they reached the inn. Here the constable, at Anthony's desire, stepped in front of the men, and said, "In the town they are revolting against the government, it is against all us Germans. The enemy in arms is not numerous, we have seen how the German peasant can deal with them. Whoever is an honest man will stay here, and help the citizens of the town to turn out the strangers. The rifle corps will send some one, to tell us how we can help them, therefore remain together, my countrymen."

After these words many called out, "We will remain here;" some were in a state of anxiety and stole about the house and into the field. Those who remained looked about for weapons of whatever kind they could find, heavy cudgels, staves of wheels, and pitchforks. •

"I came here to buy powder and shot," said the forester to Anthony; "now, I have a musket, and will spend the last grain to-day, in taking revenge for the insult done to our eagle."

During this time, those in the castle were passing their day till noon as usual. The baron, led by his wife, walked in the sunshine round the castle; he grumbled a little because the mole-hills, against which his foot stumbled, were not yet levelled, and came to the conclusion, that there was no relying upon either agents or servants, and Wohlfart was more forgetful than any other. He dwelt on this topic with grumbling satisfaction. The baroness contradicted him, as much as was possible, without exciting his morbid temper, and he seated himself at length in the open air, on a chair which the servant carried after him, and listened

quietly to his daughter, who, assisted by Karl, was marking out the place for a little shrubbery. No one expected any bad news, every one was occupied with what immediately concerned him.

But now the intelligence that something dreadful was going on, flew with owl's wings over the plain; it arrived also at the baron's island in the forest, and it fluttered over the firs and the pear-tree, over the corn-fields and pasture-ground, up to the castle. First it came indistinctly like a tiny cloud on a sunny sky, then it became larger, like a huge bird that darkens the air: it struck the hearts of all in the village and castle with its dark wings, and drew burning tears from the eyes.

In the middle of his work Karl looked suddenly up, startled, and said to Leonora, "That was a shot!"

Leonora looked at him alarmed, then laughed at her own fears, and answered, "I did not hear anything, perhaps it was the forester."

"The forester is in the town," replied Karl gravely.

"Then it is some d——d poacher in the woods," exclaimed the baron, angrily.

"It was a cannon-shot," maintained the obstinate Karl.

"That is impossible, there is no artillery stationed for many miles round," said the baron, but he himself listened, with suspense on his countenance.

At that instant a voice from the farmyard called out "Rosmin is on fire." Karl looked at Leonora, threw his spade down, and ran to the farm. Leonora followed him, "Who said that Rosmin was on fire?" he asked of the ploughmen, who were walking from the yard to their dinner. Nobody had said it, but they all ran frightened to the high road to look in the direction of Rosmin, though every one knew that the town was more than ten miles distant, and there was no view of it on that side.

"There are women running on the road to Neudorf as if in great trouble," said one of the men; and another cried, "There must be awful things in Rosmin, for one sees the smoke rising over the wood." All thought they saw a dark shadow over the spot where the town lay, even Karl. The agitation kept increasing, without any distinct reason for it. The villagers assembled on the road, all looked in the direction of Rosmin, and spoke of the misfortune that had befallen the town. "The noble-men went there to-day," exclaimed one, "they have set fire to the town;" and his next-door neighbour had heard from a man in the field that this was a day which all the landlords would remember. The man gave a hostile look at Karl, and added, "Many things may happen before night-fall." The innkeeper ran up and called to Karl, "If only this day were over," and Karl replied, in the same tone, "I wish so too." Neither knew exactly why.

From that time fresh messengers of terror arrived from the world beyond the wood. The soldiers and Poles are fighting a battle," said one; "Kunau is also burning," cried out some women who were returning, from the field. Finally, the bailiff's wife from the new farm came running breathless, to Leonora: "My husband has sent me because he will not leave the farm on this terrible day. He wishes to know if you have heard anything of the forester. There is murder and fighting in the town, and the forester is firing among them."

"Who says that?" interrupted the baron.

"One who ran across the field related it to my husband," said the frightened woman; "and it must be true that everything is upside down, for when the forester went to the town, he had no rifle with him." All felt sure from this fact that the bad news was true. "And last night

there was a fiery glow over the fields," the woman went on; "our room was quite light. My husband jumped out of bed, and went out. There was a blue light, like a sulphur flame, moving over the wood, towards Rosmin." Thus rumour struck the heart of men with its wings. Karl had some difficulty in persuading the ploughmen to go back with their teams to the field. Leonora ascended with Karl to the roof of the tower, to look out for anything fresh. Karl could not decide if there was a cloud of smoke over the town, but in more than one place, behind the woods, they saw something like the glow of fire and clouds of smoke. No sooner had they come down than a ploughman came galloping home with his horses, and announced that "a peasant from another province, who was galloping along the forest road, had told him that Rosmin was filled with scythemen and people who had red banners in their hands, and that all the Germans in the country had been shot."

The baroness began to wring her hands and to weep, and her husband lost the last vestige of tranquillity which he had with difficulty maintained. He abused Wohlfart violently for not being at home on such a day, and sent for Karl, who, not less frightened, was in great anxiety about Anthony's fate. The baron desired him to lock everything in the courtyard. Immediately after, he called for him again, and ordered him to forbid the innkeeper from selling brandy to the villagers on that day. Leonora could not bear the sultry atmosphere of the castle; she walked incessantly between the castle and the farm, and kept near Karl, in whose honest face she found the greatest comfort. Meanwhile, she kept looking at the high road, to see if anything made its appearance, either carriage or messenger.

"He is calm," she said to Karl; "he will not expose himself to such fearful danger." She wished to receive a consoling answer.

But Karl shook his head. "There is no answering for his calmness, if things are going on in the town as they say. Herr Anthony will not be the last to join in it. He won't think of himself."

"No, that he won't," exclaimed Leonora, wringing her hands.

Thus it went on till towards evening. Karl kept the servants, who were all standing outside the court, strictly together. He seized his carbine—he did not know himself for what—had a horse saddled, and fastened it again to the crib. Then the innkeeper came running with a servant from the distillery to the castle. The good-humoured man cried out, while still at a distance, to Leonora: "Here is news, terrible news, of Herr Wohlfart." Leonora rushed up to the stranger. The man gave in Polish a confused report of the terrors of the day in Rosmin. He had seen Poles and Germans shooting at each other in the market-place, and Herr Rentmaster had marched at the head of the German peasants.

"I knew he would," exclaimed Karl proudly.

Then the servant related how he himself had fled, just when all the Poles had fired at the gentleman. He could not say precisely if he was dead or alive, being himself in a great fright, but he thought he must be dead.

Leonora leant against the wall; Karl despairingly put both his hands to his head. "Saddle the pony," said Leonora, with broken voice.

"You would not go yourself, at night, through the wood, that long way, to the town alone?" cried out Karl.

Without answering, the courageous girl went to the stable. Karl sprang forward to intercept her. "You must not," he shouted out; "the baroness would die of fright for you, and what could you do among those frantic men?"

Leonora stopped. "Well, get him here," she exclaimed, half fainting; "bring him to us alive or dead."

"Ought I to leave you on such a day?" said Karl, beside himself.

Leonora tore the carbine from his arm, and called out, "Away, if you love him. I will watch in your stead."

Karl rushed to the farm, pulled the horse out, and dashed off on the road to Rosmin.

The clattering of the horse's hoofs died away; all was still again. Leonora walked up and down in front of the castle with rapid steps. Her friend was in peril of death! perhaps he was lost! And it was her fault, for she had brought him here. She felt a burning desire to see him, to hear the sound of his voice. In her despair she thought incessantly of what he had been to her parents and to her. It appeared to her impossible to pass her future in this solitude without him. Her mother sent for her; her father called to her out of the window; she would not listen to them. All her sentiments were absorbed in the pure and deep feeling of affection which had sprung up between her and the lost one.

Anthony and his peasants were standing in anxious suspense at the door of the "Red Stag." The scared market-people were still passing by to their villages, most of them with flying steps, but many stopped and joined them, and a Polish salute was often heard, and several Poles came up to Anthony, and asked if they could be of any use to him. At last the locksmith, in his green uniform and epaulettes, appeared, followed by some of the burgher rifles, not by the road, but from the garden of the inn.

Anthony hastened to meet him, and asked how things were going on.

"Eighteen men are come: they are good men. The market people are dispersing, and those in the wine-house are increased but little. They are now busy deposing the magistrates. Our captain has the courage of a devil. If you will help him, he is willing to venture anything. We can enter from behind into Loewenberg's house. I made the lock of the back-door myself, and therefore understand it, and perhaps it is not even locked; if we manage well, we may surprise some of the leaders in the house; we may seize them and their weapons."

"We must attack them in front and rear at the same time," answered Anthony; "then we shall make sure of them."

"Yes," said the locksmith, a little confused, "if you will attack them with your men in front."

"We have no arms," said Anthony. "I will go with you in front, and the forester also, and perhaps some others; but an unarmed handful, against scythemen, and a dozen muskets, that is impossible."

"Look you," said the honest locksmith, "it is difficult also for us. Coming, just on the first alarm, from one's wife and child, one is not disposed to place oneself exactly as a target. Our men are well-intentioned, but the others are desperate fellows. So let us come quietly from behind; if we surprise them, much less blood will be spilt, and that is the main thing. I bring no muskets, only a sword for you."

Silently, the little band moved on, the locksmith leading. "Our rifles have assembled in the captain's house. We can get there, through the gardens, without being seen by the guard at the gate." They advanced through kitchen-gardens, and sometimes had to climb over fences; then they rapidly crossed the road leading round the town walls, passed the brook on some planks, and entered through a sally port which opened into a tanner's yard. "Wait here," said the locksmith; "the tanner is one of our rifles, and from the door of his house one goes into the same back lane

which leads to Loewenberg's yard. I go to report to the captain, and then will fetch you."

The countrymen had stood only a few minutes on the heap of tan, when the forester, who was standing sentry at the door of the house, announced the starting of the rifles. In the back lane the two troops met, and exchanged short greetings. The captain—a well-fed butcher—summoned Anthony to walk by his side, and join his division of the rifles. Silently they marched up to the back-door of Loewenberg's house; it was neither locked nor guarded. The locksmith looked through the back buildings into the empty yard. The troops stopped for a minute, and the forester hastened up to the leaders. "There are more of us than are required for the house," he said hastily; "close by is a broad cross street that leads to the market-place. Give me a drummer, a few rifles, and half the peasants, and we will run up to the market, and take possession of the end of the street, with loud shouts. Those in the market-place will be distracted by this movement, and while they are looking after us, you may force your way into the house, and make prisoners of all there. As soon as I cause the drum to be beat, the captain will rush with the main body through the yard into the front part of the house, and occupy the door."

"I approve of this," said the fat captain, flurried, and in that state of excitement which seizes the breast of the boldest man before an onset "Now forward."

The forester collected six riflemen, beckoned to the constable and a number of the peasants, and marched with this troop, and without noise, into the empty side street. Anthony also felt, during the suspense of the next few minutes, the blood hammering at his temples. At last they heard the drum beating, and immediately a loud hurrah! Like lions, the burghers sprang through the court, the captain foremost, waving his sword; next to him Anthony. Thus they penetrated into the hall before any one observed them. Everybody in the house had hurried to the windows and to the door.

"Hurrah!" shouted the captain, "we have them;" and he seized one of the gentlemen by the nape of the neck. "Not one shall escape; close the door!" he roared out, holding his victim by the collar, as he would a cow by the horns. By the strength of ten men, the door of the house was closed and locked, so that in their zeal, the enemy, who were standing within the doorway, were pushed out. Then the riflemen darted into the rooms, and part of them to the upper floor; those of the gentlemen who were in the room sprang out through the window, and thus it happened that the citizens seized nothing in the wine-room, but a list of names, a heap of scythes, tied together, and in the corner, half-a-dozen guns, that belonged to the noblemen. The locksmith immediately seized the guns, and ran with Anthony and some others, whom Anthony summoned together, behind the house into the bye-street, to the assistance of the band led by the forester. They found them in a critical position. The men had bravely advanced, behind the forester, to the end of the street. The drum, and the hurrah, and the attack on the house, had confused the adversary. The scythemen had run away from the house, and stood among the disorderly crowd in the market-place. The man with the scarf, himself without a weapon, was busy arranging the helpless rabble; but the men armed with muskets, consisting of farmers, foresters, and sundry young noblemen, bravely marched towards the approaching enemy, and had formed in front of them. The burgher riflemen were startled at the armed body, and retired towards the street. The forester remained alone



between the two hostile parties. In this embarrassment the drummer took to beating his drum again with all his might, the Poles held their firearms to their cheeks, the forester gave his command at the same time, "Ready!" And both parties remained in the act of aiming at each other, checked by the awe of the terrific consequences which the first command to fire would have. At that instant the locksmith rushed forth with his followers; the firearms were speedily distributed to the men, who grasped eagerly at them, and Anthony and the valiant locksmith sprang into the first row of the burgher rifles. A bloody struggle seemed inevitable.

At this moment the captain's voice sounded loud from the window of the wine-room across the market-place: "Citizens, we have seized them. Here is my prisoner; it is Herr von Tarow himself." They all lowered their arms, and listened to his voice. The captain held the head of the prisoner up to the window, who, resigned to his fate, made no attempt to free himself from his unpleasant position. "And now, mark me, every window of this house is occupied; all the streets are occupied, as you see, on this side. As soon as I move a finger you will all be shot."

"Hurrah, captain!" exclaimed a voice from one of the centre houses opposite, and the tradesman who lived there stretched out his duck-gun from the first floor; so did the apothecary and postmaster near him, who rented the town hunting-ground.

"Good morning, gentlemen," cried out the butcher, delighted, for a bold confidence now filled his heart. "You see, men, that resistance is useless; throw your scythes down, or you will all be dead men." A number of scythes clattered on the pavement. "And you, gentlemen sportsman," continued the captain, "may retreat unmolested, if you will surrender your arms; but if one of you even makes a face, this man's blood will be upon your head." So saying, he again held Tarowsky's head to the window, and drew a large butcher's knife out of his uniform. He flung the sheath out into the street, and waved the knife so ferociously round the head of the prisoner, that the honest butcher looked terrific, and quite like a cannibal.

The forester cried out delighted, "Hurrah! we have them. March on!" The drummer began to beat his drum, and the Germans made a rapid onset. The rifles also threw themselves out of the house and into the market-place. The crowd of Polish musketeers got into disorder; some of the boldest of them fired their arms, and from the ranks of the assailants some shots also were fired. The rest of the scythes rattled down, and the scythemen first scattered themselves in rapid flight; immediately afterwards the musketeers betook themselves to their heels. The Germans pursued them; some more shots were fired; the fugitives were driven about the market-place, some took refuge in the houses, and others escaped through the town-gates. The drummer marched round the whole market-place, sounding the alarm, and now armed citizens came pouring in from all sides, and the tardy riflemen appeared one after the other. The captain handed his prisoner over to some stout men, and putting aside the congratulations of his friends with a wave of his hand, called out, "The service first of all, gentlemen! The most necessary thing is to close and guard the gates. Where is the captain of our allies?"

Anthony approached. "Comrade," the brave butcher said, saluting him, "I think we had better assemble our men, have a review, and arrange the guards.

The different corps ranged themselves in the market-place; first the rifles, then the country people, under the command of the forester; on the other side, a troop of volunteers, which kept continually increasing.

It was a long rank, and the Rosmin people felt proud at seeing how strong they were. The captain made them turn and pass by in file; then the watch was set, the gates were occupied, and guards were stationed before the public buildings, half-citizens and half-countrymen. The arms which had been torn down were cleaned; some patriotic ladies collected the first flowers from the gardens of the town, and adorned the arms with garlands and wreaths. In solemn possession they were carried to the custom-house and post-office. The whole of the troops presented arms, and the captain proposed patriotic cheers, which were given from many hundred throats. Anthony stood on one side, and when he saw the first flowers of spring on the arms, he remembered how, in the morning, he had doubted whether he should see any this year; now their colours were shining gaily on the badge of his fatherland. But what had he not gone through since the morning?

The captain roused him out of his meditation by inviting him to come to the town-hall, as a member of the committee which had been formed for the security of the place. Thus he found himself suddenly in the town-hall, before a green table, amongst strangers, but as one of themselves. Soon after he took a pen in his hand, and drew up a report of the events of the day for the magistrates. The committee showed great activity; messengers were sent to the nearest military stations; the houses of suspected persons were searched for the fugitives; the townspeople of their own accord provided food and drink for the countrymen, who declared themselves ready to remain in the town till evening; patrols were sent out in all directions; some of the prisoners were examined, and the news which came in from the neighbourhood was collected. On all sides they received reports. Polish bands had been seen marching from several villages on the road to the town. In the contiguous province an insurrection had been tried in the same way, and there it had succeeded; the town was in the hands of the Polish youths. The fugitives related stories of plunder, of fire-signals that were lighted all about the country, of a general revolt of the Poles, and of the intended massacre that was to have taken place of all the Germans. The faces of the Rosmin people became longer; the joy of victory, which had for some hours prevailed in the town-hall, gave way to anxiety for the future. Several persons said that the town must come to terms with the captive Lord of Tarow, because the citizens themselves were not to be relied upon, and many Poles were living within the walls, and the fire-arms of the enemy were still concealed. The timid ones, however, were overpowered by the warlike spirit of the majority. It was resolved to remain under arms during the night, and hold the town against any foreign bands till the military should arrive.

Evening came on, and Anthony, disquieted by the numerous reports of plundering in the open country, left the council-chamber of the town-hall, and sent the constable to collect the Germans of their neighbourhood, that they might journey together. Betwixt the captain of the rifles and the locksmith, and with beating of drums, and three cheers from the rifles, he passed with his people through the gate as far as the last houses of the suburb; then at the wooden bridge over the brook, the townspeople took a brotherly leave of the countrymen.

"Your carriage shall be the last that crosses to-night," said the locksmith; "we will lift up the planks of the bridge behind you and place a sentry there." The captain took off his hat and said; "In the name of the town and of the worshipful company of burgher rifles, I thank you all for the friendly help you have given us.

If bad times should come, as we all fear, we Germans will stand by one another."

"We will hold to that," exclaimed the constable, and the country people repeated it.

Then the villagers marched on across the dark plain. Anthony went on foot with the others, and made his carriage drive slowly after them. The forester selected some lads who carried the conquered guns, and formed an advanced guard of them. The smith of Kunau, who knew every man in the province, represented what the forester called a *vidette*. Every bush and insecure place was carefully searched, and the passengers whom they met were stopped and examined; they heard many alarming things, but their road was not interrupted by any insurgents. Thus the men proceeded in earnest conversation: all felt exalted by their share in the deeds of the day; but none concealed from themselves that this was only the beginning, and that hard times were to follow. "How shall we get through these times in the country?" said the constable; "those townspeople have their walls and live close together; but we are exposed to the revenge of any rascal, and if half-a-dozen of these vagabonds come with muskets into the village, we are lost."

"It is true," said Anthony, "that we cannot defend ourselves from large masses, and individuals must in such times bear what war lays upon them; but the large masses who are under the command of good generals, are not what we have to fear: the worst are, the bands of lawless rabble who collect together, incendiaries, and plunderers, and against these we must henceforth endeavour to defend ourselves. Stay at home to-morrow, men of Neudorf and Kunau, and send messengers to other Germans in the neighbourhood who side with us. To-morrow I will come to see you early, and we will then consult if we can do anything for our security."

Thus they arrived at the cross-way where the road turns off to the castle through the forest. Anthony stopped a little while in consultation with the constable and smith, then they parted like old friends, and each party hastened to their own village.

Anthony got into his carriage and took the forester with him, that he might help to guard the castle during the night. In the middle of the wood they were arrested by a loud, "Who goes there? Stop!"

"Karl," exclaimed Anthony, delighted.

"Hurrah! hurrah! he is alive," cried Karl, frantic with joy, and galloped up to the carriage; "are you unhurt?"

"I am, how are all at the castle?" Now there followed a quick account of all that had happened. "What a pity that I was not there," exclaimed Karl again and again.

As they drove up to the castle, a light figure flew up to the carriage. "Fraulein Leonora!" cried out Anthony, springing out of it.

"Dear Wohlfart," said Leonora, taking both his hands. She leaned on his shoulder for a moment, and tears rushed from her eyes. Anthony kept hold of her hands, and looking tenderly at her said, "A dreadful time is approaching, I have been thinking of you the whole day."

"As we have got you again," exclaimed Leonora, "I will listen quietly to all; come quickly to my father, he is dying of impatience." She led him up the staircase.

The baron opened the door and called to Anthony, whilst still in the passage; "What news do you bring?"

"War, my lord baron," he answered seriously; "I have seen the most hideous of all struggles, bloody war between neighbour and neighbour. The country is in a state of insurrection."

## VOLUME III.

## CHAPTER I.

THE baron's property was situated in a corner of the district of Rosmin. To the north, behind the wood, was Neudorf, a village inhabited by German freeholders; and further to the east, Kunau. A broad strip of sand and heath separated these places from the Polish estates, of which Herr von Tarowski's was the nearest. To the west and the south the estate was bounded by districts with a mixed population, the Germans were numerous there. Rich landed proprietors had settled amongst the Slaves, and large villages of freeholders had sprung up. To the north, beyond Neudorf and Kunau, there was a Polish strip, with many small manors, part of them deeply mortgaged, and inhabited by ruined families.

"The greatest danger threatens us from that side," said the baron to Anthony, the morning after the market day. "The freehold villages will be our natural outposts. If you can get the village people to organize a regular guard, their posts might occupy the frontier to the north; we would try to keep up a regular communication with them, do not forget the fire-signals and alarm-houses. As you are already on a familiar footing with the peasants, you had better take charge of this business. Have the carriage ready for me. I will drive to the neighbouring district and endeavour to enter into a similar arrangement with the landlords there. I will take young Sturm with me."

Anthony rode over to Neudorf. Fresh messengers of misfortune had arrived there during the night. Several German villages had been occupied by armed bands, they had searched the houses for weapons, and had dragged young men away with them. No one was working in the fields; the men were sitting in the tavern, or standing about the constable's house, helpless, and every moment expecting an attack. Anthony's horse was immediately surrounded by a dense crowd, and when the constable invited the men into the public-room, the whole community was in a short time assembled. Anthony explained to them what might be done to protect their village from the danger of a sudden surprise; the organization of a village militia, regular posts in the lanes along the boundary; alarm-poles, patrols, a house of rendezvous in the village, and other precautionary measures of a similar kind, which the baron had pointed out to him. "By this means," he proceeded, "you can call upon us, and your neighbours in general, for assistance; in a short time you will be in a position to help yourselves against a weak enemy, and to send quickly for the help of the military against a strong one. You will save your wives and children, and what you value most of your goods; and perhaps your cattle from plunder and ill-treatment. Mounting guard day and night will be no little trouble to you; but your village is large. Perhaps a similar arrangement will ere long be ordered by the magistrates; but it is safer for all of us not to wait for that, we can be armed in a few days."

His impressive words, and the authority of the sensible constable, brought the community to a unanimous decision. Anthony, with the constable, and some of the principal people of the village, rode along the

boundary, and fixed the points for guards, and alarm-signals. Meanwhile the schoolmaster drew up a register of the militia, and put down those who could serve on horseback, and those who could serve on foot; and procured information with regard to the arms in the village. Many declared themselves ready to buy arms; the village lads took up the thing zealously, and the women packed up carefully in boxes and bundles, the most precious portion of their goods. From Neudorf, Anthony went with the heads of the community over to Kunau; there also he found the same good will, similar arrangements were agreed upon, and at last it was determined that the young people from both villages should march every Sunday afternoon to the baron's estate, to exercise there together.

When Anthony returned to the castle, measures for the defence of the property were discussed. A warlike fire was kindled in the German colony, everyone was carried away by it, even the most peaceful; the shepherd and his dog Crambo—the latter by nightly duty on the outposts and patrols, got into a rage with certain foreign legs, which he had often snarled at with his younger companion. All thoughts were turned towards deadly weapons. Whatever the estate possessed of arms was brought to light. The spirit was good; but, alas! the numbers were small; men for duty were wanting, but the staff was excellent. There was first, the baron himself, an invalid it is true, but valuable for theory; then Karl and the forester, as leaders of the horse and infantry, and Anthony, not to be despised, as general-superintendent and maker of fortifications.

The baron left his room daily in the afternoon, to hold a council of war: he discussed the exercising of the militia, received reports of the movements in the neighbourhood, and despatched messengers to the German districts. A glimmer of military pride shone on his face: he scolded his wife good-humouredly, for her anxiety, spoke cheerfully to all the Germans who came near him, and threatened all the ill-disposed spirits in the village, with prison and bread and water during his pleasure. All the forming people were touched at seeing their blind lord, standing erect with a musket in his hand, teaching the forester some new method of exercise, and then turning his ear towards him, that he might hear by the stroke of the hand if he had understood him. Anthony also fastened a cockade on his cap, and his voice acquired a tone of military vigour. Since the day at Rosmin he always wore immense jack-boots, and his step fell heavy on the staircase. He would have laughed at himself, if anybody had asked him why he exhibited the exaltation of his mind upon his legs. But nobody did ask him; everyone felt that something of the kind was necessary. As for Karl, he never showed himself, except in the remains of his extra uniform, which he had carefully preserved—in his soldier's cap, braided coat, and old military cloak. He twirled his moustache and whistled all day soldiers' songs. Since the greatest danger was to be feared from lawless men in their own village, he assembled all those who had served in the army, at the inn, and with the assistance of the forester, who was held in great consideration as a sorcerer, made them a powerful speech in his shako and pelisse, and with his sword by his side; he treated them as comrades, struck his sword, and cried out, "We soldiers will keep order amongst these peasants." Then he had some quarts of brandy placed before them, and sang enthusiastic warsongs with them; finally, he distributed new cockades and engaged them as paid soldiers of the militia. Thus he kept the most active men steady for some time at least, and from them he learnt whatever passed in the tavern amongst the ill-disposed.

When, on the ensuing day, the forces of the estate were reviewed in front of the castle, the men looked astonished at one another. They were all changed within the last few days. Herr Rentmaster looked like a savage who had come out of a foreign swamp, where he had daily waded in the water up to his middle; the men from the new farm came dressed like spirits from the antediluvian world; the forester, with his hair cut short, and long beard, in a faded coat, with a gloomy face full of wrinkles, and bushy eyebrows, resembled an old hireling of Wallenstein's army, who had slept in the forest for two centuries, and now again was stepping out into the world, because mischief and terror had resumed their sway; and if daring thoughts and fierce hatred against the enemy could make a Wallensteiner, he really was what he seemed to be. The shepherd walked by his side like a pious Hussite; the broad brim of his round hat hung down over his shoulders, a brown leather girdle surrounded his waist, in his hand he held a crooked stick, to which he had fastened a glittering iron point; his phlegmatic countenance, and the thoughtful expression of his eyes, made him as unlike the forester as possible.

Altogether the armed force of the estate did not amount to more than twenty men; with this limited number of available hands, it was difficult to arrange guards for the village and castle. The greatest exertions would be required from each individual; but no one complained, all, the former soldiers of the village included, were ready for any kind of warlike work.

After the men were collected, the security of the castle was to be thought of. To protect the back of the vast mansion from a night attack, Anthony had a fence of strong boards made from one wing to the other. In this way a tolerably spacious court-yard was enclosed, and within it an open shed was built against the wall of the house, where fugitives or the horses of soldiers quartered there, might, in cases of need, find shelter for a short time. As the lower story of the house was at some height from the ground, and the windows guarded with a strong wood-work, and as all the entrances to the house opened into the new court-yard, the access was rendered as difficult as possible for the uninvited. The well of the castle was situated outside the yard, half-way between the farm and the castle; therefore a great water-butt was placed within the castle, and filled fresh every morning.

From Rosmin they now received intelligence. The locksmith, after repeated requests, at last made his appearance, in order to fasten a lining of iron on the doors of the hall and fence, and to furnish them with strong bolts. He brought military greetings from the captain of the Burghers; and the news that a body of infantry had arrived in the town. "The number of soldiers is but small," he said, "and we rifles also have hard duty."

"And what have you done with your prisoner?" asked Anthony.

The locksmith rubbed his ear, and fumbled with his cap, as he answered dejectedly: "Why, don't you know yet? The very first night a message came from the enemy, that they would advance with all their forces, and burn our barns, if we did not set the nobleman free at once. I remonstrated, and so did our captain; but every one who had a barn began to lament, and the end of it was that the town came to an agreement with Herr von Tarow. He was obliged to give his word that he and his people would undertake nothing further against the town; and thereupon we conveyed him over the bridge, and set him at liberty."

"So he is free, the traitor," exclaimed Anthony, provoked.

"Yes, truly," said the locksmith, "he is again on his property, and

has a number of young gentlemen about him. They ride over the fields with their cockades, just as before. Tarowsky is a sly fox, he opens every lock with the fine end of a feather; he gets everybody round."

Of course the farming suffered from all these preparations, though Anthony insisted rigorously on at least the most necessary things being done; yet he felt that the time was come when care for our own individual weal and woe fades away before anxiety about the highest good that man possesses on earth. The rumours grew more threatening every day, and kept him and all around in a continual excitement, which at last worked the mind into a state of habitual feverish suspense. They looked forward to the coming time with a wild indifference, and bore the discomforts of the present as a matter of course.

But Leonora suffered from this fever more than any of the men on the estate. Since the day that she had waited for the absent Anthony, a new life had begun for her. Her mother mourned and despaired over the dreadful times; but the daughter's youthful heart beat bravely at the prospect of the coming storm, and the excitement became a wild enjoyment, to which she passionately gave herself up. All day long she was in the open air, in the roughest weather she ran to and fro in her half boots, between the castle and the farm; either as her father's aide-de-camp, or as a partisan on her own account. She was at this time as frequently seen at the door of the tavern as the worst drunkard of the village; for every day she went to hear the reports from the innkeeper and his wife. Since Karl had worn a hussar jacket, she treated him with comrade-like familiarity, and when he discussed matters with the forester, Leonora's head was bent forward to assist in the secret consultation. For hours the three sat together in council of war, in Karl's room, or in the yard; the men listened with respect to the spirited advice of the girl, and did not fail to ask her opinion whether it was advisable to trust Ignaz Gottlieb, or Blasius, in the village, with a musket. In vain the baroness begged, and scolded her warlike daughter; in vain Anthony tried to stop her, for great as Anthony's own ardour was, it displeased him in the young lady; she appeared to him too bold and impetuous, and he showed her that he thought so; then she pouted for a short time, and endeavoured to conceal her martial inclinations from him, but she did not really change. She would willingly have gone with him to Neudorf and Kunau, in order to play at war amongst the neighbours; but happy as he would have been in her company on any other occasion, he protested eagerly against it, and the young lady, at his request, was obliged to turn back at the end of the village.

On the day when the first exercising of the estate militia was to take place, Leonora appeared from the castle in a cap and with a light sword, took her pony out of the stable, and said to Anthony, "I shall go with you."

"You must not do it, Fraulein."

"But I will," cried Leonora, daringly. "You are in want of men; I can serve as well as a man."

"But, dear Fraulein," said Anthony, imploringly, "it will have such an extraordinary appearance."

"It is indifferent to me if it is thought extraordinary or not," cried Leonora. "I am strong, I can bear a great deal and shall not be tired."

"But before the servants," represented Anthony; "you will compromise yourself in their eyes."

"That is my business," said Leonora, obstinately; "don't contradict me; I will, so there's an end of it."

Anthony shrugged his shoulders, and was obliged to consent to it. Leonora rode by Karl's side, and followed the military evolutions, as much as a lady's saddle would allow; but Anthony, from his place with the infantry, looked dissatisfied at the light figure. She had never pleased him so little. When she was wildly advancing with the others, wheeling her horse round and striking the air with her sword, with her beautiful hair loosened by the wind, and her eyes radiant with warlike ardour, she was gloriously beautiful; but what would have enchanted Anthony if it had been a game, in this bitter earnest appeared to him unwomanly; he could not help thinking of a rider of the circus. Once this resemblance had captivated his heart, now it chilled him to the soul. After the drilling was over, Leonora with burning cheeks came near him, expecting him to speak to her; but he remained silent, and Leonora was obliged to ride up to him and ask him laughingly, "Why do you look so sullen, sir? you must know that it is not at all becoming to you."

"I am not at all pleased that you behave so wildly," answered Anthony. Leonora turned silently away, gave her horse to a servant, and went indignantly back to the castle.

From that time she renounced participation in the drills; but when the armed force met she never failed to observe them at a distance. When Anthony was absent, she tried secretly to ride over with Karl to the neighbouring village, or her enthusiasm led her in her walks to inspect the alarm signals. She roved by herself through the fields and forests, with a pocket-pistol, and was happy whenever she could stop and cross-question a traveller.

For this also Anthony remonstrated with her. "The country is unsafe," he said; "how easily you might meet with some footpad who would injure you; and if not a stranger, even the villagers might do so."

"I have no fears," said Leonora; "and the men of our village will not hurt me. And, indeed, she knew how to manage them better than Anthony or anybody else. She alone was greeted by all, even the rudest, in the respectful Polish manner. Whenever she passed through the village, the men bowed down to her knee, and the women ran to the window, and looked after her admiringly. She enjoyed the delight of being told so in his presence.

One Sunday evening, while the peasants were drinking in the tavern, Karl, the forester, and shepherd were sitting in the guard-room, at the farm, watching—for Sunday was the most dangerous day at the castle. Karl had fitted up a room for military purposes, provided it with benches and chairs, and with trusses of straw for beds. This day Leonora brought to the guard-room a bottle of rum and some lemons from the castle, and advised the bailiff to brew a little war-punch. The shepherd and the forester, happy at this attention, grinned from ear to ear. Karl sprang up, and placed a chair for the Fraulein; the forester began immediately a dreadful story about a band of robbers in the contiguous country; and so it happened, naturally, that Leonora sat down for a few minutes, and exchanged her ideas on the course of the world with her faithful adherents. Just as the punch was ready, and Leonora herself was pouring it out into two glasses and a pot, Anthony came in. His arrival was inopportune, for this proceeding vexed him; however, he did not scold, but turned to the door, and beckoned to a stranger to come in. A tall country lad, in a blue coat with bright woollen lace, a soldier's cap in his hand, and wide linen trousers stuffed into his boots, marched proudly into the room. There his eye fell on the Fraulein—like a flash of lightning, he was at her feet, kissed her knees, and then remained in



that position, with his head bent down, his cap in his hand, and his eyes cast on the ground. Karl approached him: "Well, Blasius, what news from the inn?"

"Oh, nothing," answered the lad, in that melodious tone in which the Pole speaks his broken German. "The peasants sit and drink and are merry."

"Are there strangers there—is any one come from Tarow?"

"None," said Blasius; "nobody is there but the host and his niece—the Jewish maiden, Rebecca." As he spoke, he fixed his eyes on Leonora, as the mistress to whom he was to make the report. Leonora went to the table, filled a glass, and handed it to the lad. Delighted, the youth took the glass, turned aside, and drank it at a draught, placed the empty glass on the table, and again bent down to Leonora's knee—all, with a grace that a prince might have envied. "You need have no fears," said he, with sudden enthusiasm, to Leonora; "nobody in the village will hurt you; we will kill whoever dares to touch you."

Leonora coloured, and said, looking at Anthony, "I have no fears, and least of all of you." The bailiff dismissed the youth, with instructions to return in a few hours.

As he went out, Leonora said to Anthony, "How good his manners are!"

"He was in the Guards," answered Anthony, "and is not the worst in the village; but I beg of you not to rely too much on the chivalry of honest Blasius and his friends. I have been again, the whole afternoon, full of anxiety about your long absence, and towards evening sent your maid to meet you on the Rosmin road. A frightened artisan came running to the castle, and related that he had been stopped by an armed lady on the way, who had obliged him to show his travelling passport. According to his account, this lady was followed by an enormous dog, as large as a cow, and he was frightened at her ferocious looks. The man was quite out of his wits."

"He was a hare!" said Leonora, contemptuously; "when he saw me and my pony, he ran away as if he was troubled with a bad conscience. I called after him, and threatened him with my pocket-pistol."

Thus prepared, the inhabitants of the castle awaited daily the outbreak of the insurrection on their forest island. Meanwhile, the revolution spread like wildfire over the whole province. Where the Poles were numerous, it flamed up to the skies; at the boundaries, the flame flickered here and there, like a fire in green wood; in many places it was extinguished, and for a time all was quiet; then the flame burst out suddenly again.

There was a great review of the allied villagers one Sunday afternoon. The men of Neudorf and Kunau arrived with flying banners—the infantry in front, and the lads, on horseback, in rear. The little troop of ploughboys, led by Karl, rode to meet them, and also several men on foot, with the forester at their head, as generalissimo of the three armies. Anthony, also, had placed himself under the command of the forester, and when Leonora saw him setting forth she ordered her pony to be saddled.

"I will look at you," she said to Anthony.

"But only look, dear young lady."

"Don't play the schoolmaster," Leonora called out after him.

The parade was at the skirt of the wood. The forester, from his old recollections, and after many deliberations with the baron, had planned a field-day, which was nearly sufficient to teach the men all he wanted; and

Karl led his squadron with an energy which compensated for the want of knowledge. On one side was thrown up a butt, and Karl had used the remains of his oil-colours in painting a target on which a dragon, with three tails and six legs, was spitting out fire; but this family failing was forgiven, in consideration of the amiable manner in which he presented his great heart to the shooters. They advanced for a time, wheeled, broke into files, and at last loaded. Merrily the blank shots echoed through the wood. Leonora looked at the evolutions from a distance; at last, she could not resist joining in those of the cavalry. She trotted up to the troop, and whispered to Karl, "Only for a moment!"

"But if Herr Wohlfart sees you?" whispered Karl also.

"He will not see me," answered Leonora, laughing, and took her place with the pony in the ranks. The lads looked curiously at the slender figure trotting by their side, and advancing as an outpost. They were so much engrossed with their surprise at the lady, that they performed ill, and Karl had much to find fault with. "The Fraulein does it best," cried one of the Neudorfers, during a halt. The admirers waved their hats and cheered. Leonora bowed, and made her pony curvette. But the pleasure was short, for Anthony came across the field and approached her. "It is really not right," said he, in a low voice, but seriously angry at her military activity; "you expose yourself to flippant remarks, which, though not made with any evil intention, might wound you. This is no place to show your skill in riding."

"You grudge me every pleasure," answered Leonora, irritated, and turning her pony aside.

She went off alone, exercising him, and making him bound and jump about, close to a great pear-tree, secretly grumbling against Anthony. "How rude he is to say such things to me," she thought. "My father is right—he is very prosaic. When I saw him first, I was also on the pony. I pleased him better then; we were both children, but his manners were more respectful." The thought shot through her soul, "How brilliant, beautiful, and gay life had been formerly, and how hard the present was!" And while she was musing in this way she made her pony form one figure of eight after another.

"Not badly done; but more in hand, Fraulein Leonora," cried out a manly voice near her. Frightened, Leonora looked to the side. The tall figure of a stranger was leaning against a tree, his arms folded, and a satirical smile on his nobly-formed features. The stranger walked slowly up to her, and touched his hat. "It is hard work for the old gentleman," said he, pointing to the pony. "I hope you remember me."

Leonora stared at him as at a ghost, and in her confusion slid down from her pony; an image of old times presented itself bodily before her—the cool smile, the elegant figure, and the careless assurance belonged to the past, of which she had just been thinking. "Herr von Fink!" she cried out, embarrassed; "how glad Wohlfart will be to see you."

"I have been observing him already in the distance; and if I had not known from certain infallible proofs"—here he looked again at Leonora—"that it is him wading through the sand, armed *cap-à-pie*, I should never have thought it possible."

"Come to him immediately," cried Leonora; "your arrival will be the greatest pleasure that could happen to him."

Fink walked with her to the shooting-place, where the men were just preparing to aim at the dragon. Fink stepped behind Anthony, laid his hand on his shoulder, and said, "Good day, Anthony."

Anthony turned round astonished, and threw himself on the neck of

his friend. Hasty questions and short answers were interchanged. "Where do you come from, you dear recovered friend?" exclaimed Anthony at last.

"Pretty nearly straight from over there," answered Fink, pointing to the distance; "I have only been a few weeks in the country. The last letter I got from you was dated last autumn. By that I guessed where to look for you. In the confusion that prevails all about you, it is marvellous luck that I have found you. There is Karl, too," as he galloped up, with loud cheers. "Now, as half the Firm is assembled, we may as well begin to play at office. You, indeed, seem to addict yourself to other amusements." He turned to Leonora, and continued: "I have waited on the baron, and have learnt from my lady, there, that I should find the warlike youth in the open field. Now I must venture to pray for your intercession. I know this man a little, and would gladly pass some days with him. I am perfectly aware how indiscreet it is, for a stranger to ask to be received in such times, even in your hospitable house. Do it for his sake. He is, on the whole, a good youth; and allow me the pleasure of remaining here, until I have made myself acquainted with the make of those unheard-of shooting-boots, which the lad has drawn over his knees."

Leonora answered him civilly, "My father would at any time consider your visit a great pleasure; but now a good friend is of double value. I will go at once and desire our servants to place all Herr Wohlfart's boots in your room, that you may have a long time to consider their make." she bowed, and, leading her pony by the bridle, walked up to the castle.

Fink looked after her, and exclaimed, "By Jove, she has become a beauty! Her bearing is faultless—she even understands how to walk. I no longer doubt that she has some sense." He took Anthony's arm, and led him from the shooting-ground to the wild pear-tree, shook him heartily by the hand, and cried out, "Once more I greet you, my faithful friend! I assure you I am still lost in astonishment. If anybody had told me that I should meet you again as an Indian, painted red and black, a tomahawk in your hand, and scalps at your girdle, I would have declared the man mad. You, the quiet, considerate man, born to wear watch trinkets, I find here on a desolate heath, with murderous thoughts in your heart, and, by my soul, without a cravat! If I am changed, you are not less so. You have reason to be pleased at the change."

"You know what brought me here," answered Anthony.

"I fancy so," said Fink; "I have not forgotten the dancing lessons."

A cloud passed over Anthony's brow. "Forgive me," continued Fink, "and bear with an old friend."

"You are mistaken," cried Anthony, gravely, "if you think that any feeling of passion has brought me here. A series of accidents has placed me in connection with the baron's family." (Fink smiled.) "I confess that they would have passed by me, if my mind had not been accessible to impressions from this quarter. However, I have a right to say, that I have by accident been placed in a position of great confidence here. At a time when the baron was in difficulties, I was considered by them as a man who had at least the will to assist them; they requested me, for a time, to look after their interests. When I accepted their proposal, I did it only after an inward struggle, which I have no right to unveil, not even to you."

"That is all very fine," answered Fink; "but when a merchant buys a musket and sword, he must know why he enters into such expense; therefore answer me the downright question—What are your intentions?"

"To remain here as long as I feel I can be of use, and then to seek for a place in some office."

"At our old Principal's?" asked Fink, quickly.

"Or somewhere else."

"The deuce!" cried Fink, "that does not seem a clear course, nor an open confession. However, one must not expect too much from you in the first hour. I will be more honest with you. I have freed myself from those people, and I thank you for your letter, and for the advice which your wisdom gave me. I made use, as you proposed, of the daily press, to blow up my west-country company. Of course, I was blown up also, With some thousand dollars I bought half-a-dozen pens, and made them fill the papers of New York, and some others, incessantly, with heart-rending reports of the worthlessness of the company. I made them complain of and curse me and my company in every key. The matter made a noise; Brother Jonathan began to notice it; all our competitors and rivals sounded the same horn; and I had the pleasure of seeing myself and my company pourtrayed every day, in some dozen papers, as bloodthirsty swindlers and usurers—all for my good money! It was a mad game. After a month, the West Land Company was so down, that no dog would have taken a bit of bread from them. Then my fellow-directors came of their own accord to me, and offered to pay me off, and free me from their society. You may think how happy I was. Nevertheless, I paid dear for my liberty, and, by-the-way, I left behind me the name of being a devil incarnate. Bah! it is no matter—I am at least free! And now I am come to see you, for two reasons: first, to see you again, and to gossip with you; and, secondly, to talk with you seriously over my future. And, to speak plain, I wish to have you with me; I have been wanting you the whole time. I don't know how I shall find you, for you are at bottom a dry chap, and more obstinate than I like sometimes; but, in spite of all that, I felt a certain longing for you when I was abroad. I have settled also with my father, but it was not without a hot struggle, and a cold fit afterwards. And now I repeat to you my old offer. Come with me—to the coast, to England, over the ocean, where you please—let us join, and consider what we can do; we are free, both of us, and the world is open to us."

Anthony put his arm round his friend's neck. "My dear Fritz," he cried out, "consider everything as said that is most cordial, which I feel at your generous offer; but you see, for the present, I have obligations here."

"After all you have told me officially," I conclude that will not last long," answered Fink.

"That is true, but, nevertheless, we are not alike. See," said Anthony, stretching out his hand, "dull and dreary as this landscape is, and disagreeable as the greater portion of the inhabitants are, I look at it with other eyes than you. You are more of a cosmopolite than I am, and you will have no great interest in the progress of the state, of which this plain and your friend form a portion, though a small one."

"No," said Fink, looking with wonder at Anthony, "I have no great interest in it, and, from what I hear and see of the proceedings in these parts, it does not make the state, of which you seem so proud of being a fraction, very respectable in my eyes."

"But I think otherwise," interposed Anthony; "nobody ought to leave the country now who is not obliged to do so."

"What do I hear?" said Fink, amazed.

"I will tell you," continued Anthony: "In these wild days I have

discovered how much my heart clings to the country of which I am a denizen, and have thus learnt why I remain in this province. All law and order about us are at present destroyed. I wear arms to guard my life amidst a foreign race, as do many hundreds more. Whatever business may have brought me here, as an individual, I stay now as one of the conquerors, who, in exchange for liberty, industry, and civilisation, have taken the power over this country from a weaker race. It is an old struggle between us and the Slaves, and we find, proudly, that civilisation, industry, and credit are on our side. Whatever the Polish landlords hereabouts may have become—and there are many rich and intelligent men among them—every thaler that they spend has been gained, directly or indirectly, by German intelligence. Their wild sheep have been improved by ours; we construct the machines by which they fill their spirit-casks; the value which their bonds and their estates have hitherto had rests on German credit and German confidence; even the rifles with which they are now trying to shoot us have been made in our manufactories, and furnished by our commercial houses. We have won our real sway over this country, not by intriguing politics, but in a peaceful way—by our labour; and, therefore, he who stands here as one of the conquering people, acts as a coward if he leaves his post.”

“You are boasting in a foreign land,” answered Fink, “while, at home, your own country is shaking.”

“Who joined this province to Germany?” asked Anthony, stretching out his hand.\*

“The kings of your race—I do not deny it,” said Fink.

“And who conquered the great province in which I was born?” inquired Anthony, further.

“One who was a man.”

“A bold husbandman he was,” said Anthony, “he and others of his line. At a time when almost all the rest of Germany was depressed and miserable, they won the soil in every way—by the sword or by cunning, by treaties or by surprises. Daring men and good farmers as they were, they administered the land; they dug drains across the swamps, settled men in waste districts, and reared a race hardy and industrious, and eager for conquests, like themselves; they built up a commonwealth from decayed or crushed races; with a noble feeling they made their dynasty the centre of many millions, and have created a living power out of a chaos of numberless weak princes.”

“That was the case,” said Fink, “it was done by their ancestors.”

“They were working for their own interest,” answered Anthony, “in creating a state; but we have gained life, and a new German nation has arisen. Now we claim from them the acknowledgment of our young life; it will be difficult for them to grant it, because they are accustomed to consider the country they conquered, at a crown estate gained by their sword. Who can say when the struggle between them and us will be over? For a long time we shall deplore the dreadful scenes occasioned by this conflict; but, whatever end it may have, I am sure as I am of the light of this day, that the state created by it will never return to the ruins from which it arose. If you had lived as I have during the last few years—in various employments, and much amongst the common

\* The Slaves occupied the country between the Oder and the Elbe; they were invaders themselves, and the Germans conquered it from them about the eleventh or twelfth century. The subjugation was so complete that every trace of Slavonian language and manners has been obliterated, except near the Polish boundary.—*Translator*

people—you would believe me. We are still poor as a nation—our power is limited; but we are working ourselves up in civilization, in wealth, in intelligence, and in national feeling. At this moment, we feel as brothers in this frontier district. If in the interior they are striving against each other, here we are united, and our struggle is a pure one."

"Good," said Fink; "that was spoken as a German always speaks. The drier the time, the greener the hope. From all this I see, Master Wohlfart, you are not inclined to come with me."

"I cannot," said Anthony, much moved; "do not be angry with me for it."

Fink looked down gloomily. "Listen to me," he began at last; "since our separation we have exchanged parts. When I left you, years ago, I was like a horse in the desert that smells a spring; I hoped to get out of your tedious life into the gay landscape, and what I found was a hideous swamp. And now I come back to you weary, and find you boldly playing at cards with death and the devil. You are fresher than you were; I cannot boast of that—perhaps it is because you have a home and I have none. But enough of this wisdom!—come and show me how you carry on the war, introduce me to your squatters, and let me see, if possible, a square foot of land on this charming property where one is not up to the ankles in sand."

Anthony took his friend to the country people; then through the forest, as far as the posts of the neighbouring villages: he showed the line of alarm-poles, and the alarm-houses, and explained to him the measures that had been taken to guard the castle from a sudden surprise. Fink entered eagerly into the details, and at last he said, "Well, you have managed the great point—you keep up order and good spirits amongst your men."

During this time they were making preparations in the castle for the guest. The baron sent the servant to the cellar, to see if there was a sufficient provision of white and red wine, and scolded the stable-boy, who had neglected to have the riding things repaired. The baroness had a gown taken out which she had not looked at since her arrival on the estate. Leonora thought, with secret awe, of the overbearing gentleman who had so alarmed her at the dancing lessons, and whom since she had often seen in her dreams. On the ground-floor the excitement was not less; with the exception of flying business visits, he was the first visitor. The faithful cook determined to venture upon an artistic pudding, for which, however, [the most essential ingredients were wanting in that unhappy country. She thought of killing some fowls from the farm-yard, but Suska, a Polish lass, a confidant of Leonora's, remonstrated against this project; she shed tears over the determination of the cook, and threatened to call the Fraulcin, till the cook came to her senses, and sent a barefooted boy, in great haste, to the forester's lodge, to get something out of the common way. A speedy combat with cobwebs and dust was undertaken, and a room was prepared next to Anthony's. Leonora's little sofa and her mother's velvet chair were carried in, to maintain the dignity of the family.

Fink had no idea of the excitement caused by his arrival, and lounged with Anthony through the fields, in such a merry mood as he had not felt for a long time. He told of his adventures, of money affairs, of the gigantic progress of the New World; and Anthony perceived, with pleasure, through his friend's jesting, a deep indignation at the baseness

he had met with. "It is a grand life there," he said; "but amid all the bustle of it I have distinctly felt that you here are also of some value." They then returned to the castle, and changed their toilette, and Anthony cast a look of astonishment at the arrangement of the guest's room. Soon after, the servant invited them to the baroness's apartment. Now that the anxieties about the preparations were overcome, and the lamps spread their mild light over the room, the family felt agreeably excited by the visit of the rich young aristocrat. It is once more in their house as formerly—the easy tone of the light conversation, the delicate tact which gives every one the feeling that he adds to the comfort of the others, the old manners to which they had been accustomed, and sometimes even the same topics. Fink acted his part as guest with that facility which the rogue had at command whenever he chose. He gave every one the impression how much he liked their home; he treated the baron with the respectful familiarity of a young man of his own rank, the baroness with reverence, and Leonora with frankness. He took great pleasure in talking to her, and soon overcame her embarrassment. The family felt that he was one of their own class, and there was a tacit freemasonry between them. Anthony asked himself how it was possible that Fink, the new guest, should appear as an old friend of the house, and he himself as a stranger; and again there came over him some of that feeling of respect which he as a youth had had for all that was elegant, distinguished, and exclusive. But this feeling was only a slight shadow that passed over his sounder judgment.

When Fink was leaving the room, the baron assured him, with sincere warmth, how glad he should be to keep him for some time as a guest; and even the baroness said, after he was gone, "His English manners suit him well, and he gives one the idea of a high-bred gentleman." Leonora did not think about his manners, but she became more talkative than she had been for a long time. She accompanied her mother to her bedroom, seated herself on a footstool near the bed of the tired lady, and began to chatter merrily, not of the guest, but of many things, which formerly interested her, till her mother kissed her forehead, and said, "It is enough, my child; go to bed, and do not dream."

Fink stretched himself comfortably on the sofa. "This Leonora is a practical woman," he exclaimed, with satisfaction; "simple, frank, and decided—nothing of the effeminate fantastical sentiment of your girls in general. Sit down by me for another hour, as in former days, Anthony Wohlfart, baronial rentmaster in a Selave sahara! Mark you! you are in an extraordinary position that makes my hair stand on end with amazement. You have often stood by me in former days, in the midst of my follies, as my reasonable titular spirit; now you yourself are in the very height of madness, and as I at present enjoy the advantage of being in my sober senses, my conscience forbids me abandoning you in this state of confusion."

"Fritz, my dear friend!" exclaimed Anthony, joyfully.

"That will do," said Fink. "I wish to remain for some time to come with you. Consider how we can manage it. You can do it with the ladies; but—with the baron?"

"You have heard him say," answered Anthony, "that he considers it a fortunate chance that brings a cavalier like you to his lonely mansion. It is only—" (he looked anxiously round the room) "you must be content—"

"Hem! I understand," said Fink; "you are become economical."

"That is it," said Anthony; "if I could fill the sacks with the yellow

sand from the forest, and sell it as wheat, I must still sell many sacks to bring a small steady revenue into our cash-box."

"From your having come here as cashier, I surmised that the cash-box was empty," said Fink, dryly.

"Yes," answered Anthony, "my principal cash-chest is an old dressing-case, and I can assure you that it would hold more than is in it now. I feel sometimes an invincible envy of Herr Purzell and his score in the office. If I could only have the happiness of seeing a file of grey linen bags. I am not so bold as to think of bank-notes, or a portfolio of shares."

Fink whistled a march. "Poor youth," he said. "However, the estates are large, and the farming in good train, it must either pay or cost money. What are you living upon?"

"That," said Anthony, "is a secret of the ladies that I hardly venture to betray. Our horses chew diamonds."

Fink shrugged his shoulders. "Is it possible that the Rothsattels are come to that?"

Anthony narrated, with as much delicacy as he could, the fall of the baron. He then spoke with enthusiasm of the ladies, of the dignified resignation of the baroness, and of the sterling energy of Leonora.

"I see," said Fink, "that you are in a worse position than I supposed; how is it possible that you can bear such a life? The birds on the trees are wealthy by the side of you."

"In the actual state of things," continued Anthony, "our task is to struggle through, till quieter times come, till the auction of the family manor. The creditors will not press now, and the law-courts are almost inactive. The baron cannot keep up this property, nor can he give it up now, else the little that renders a future sale possible would be lost, and the family would have no shelter for their heads. All my endeavours to move them from this province during these unquiet weeks has been in vain; they are resolute, like desperate people who await their fate. The baron's pride revolts against a return to the society in which he once lived, and the ladies will not abandon him."

"Then at least send them to some large town in the neighbourhood, and don't expose them to any attack of a drunken mob of peasants."

"I have done what I could; on that point I am powerless," answered Anthony, gloomily.

"Then, my son, let me tell you that your martial apparatus is not very encouraging. With the dozen people you can summon together in this village you can hardly keep off a gang of thieves; you cannot even guard the whole courtyard with them, nor cover the escape of the ladies. Have you any prospect of getting soldiers here?"

"None," answered Anthony.

"A very encouraging, comforting position," exclaimed Fink; "and with all that, you have ploughed your fields, and the little farm goes on like clockwork. I made Karl tell me how the place looked when he came, and what you have done hitherto to improve it. You yourself have behaved respectably; no American, or any other countrymen, could have done as much in such desperate positions. I like Germans. The women, as well as your young farm, ought to be better protected. Hire twenty fellows with strong arms to defend this place."

"You forget that we have as little means of feeding twenty idle mouths as the owl on the tower."

"They must work," cried Fink. "You have ground here which would give useful employment to a hundred hands. Have you no swamp to



drain, no dykes to throw up? Down there is a whole row of miserable water-puddles."

"That is work for another season," answered Anthony; "the ground is too wet now."

"Have some hundred acres of forest land sowed or planted. Does the brook keep its water in the summer?"

"I am told it does," answered Anthony.

"Then make them do something."

"You forget," said Anthony, smiling, "how difficult it is in our bad neighbourhood to find reliable workmen, who have also warlike talents, especially just now."

"To the devil with your objections!" cried out Fink. "Send Karl into the German country to recruit, he will procure plenty of men."

"We have no money, I have told you. The baron is not yet in a condition to carry out any great improvement, which will pay only in the course of time."

"Then let me do it," answered Fink.

"You must see, Fink, that this is impossible; the baron cannot accept such a sacrifice from his guest."

"You will repay me when you have the money."

"It is doubtful if we shall ever be in the position to repay the money."

"Well, it is not necessary that he should know how much the people cost."

"He is blind," said Anthony, reproachfully, "and I am in his service, and bound to account to him. As for him, he would soon accept a loan from you, after some chivalrous doubts, for his ideas of his condition change with his temper. But the ladies are not given to such illusions; every hour of your presence would humble them, if they were aware that they owed the improvement in their condition to your fortune."

"And yet they have accepted the much greater sacrifice that you have made," said Fink, gravely.

"Perhaps they do not consider my humble exertions a sacrifice," answered Anthony, colouring. "They have got accustomed to see me about them as an accountant, and as the baron's man of business. You are their guest; their self-respect will be wounded, and they will endeavour to conceal from you their critical condition. In order to make your room appear habitable, they have plundered their own rooms; the couch on which you lie is out of the bed-room of the Fraulein."

Fink eyed the couch inquisitively, and laid himself down again comfortably. "As I don't choose to leave the place immediately, you will have the goodness to point out how I can stay here with propriety. First tell me something about the mortgages and prospects of the estate. Fancy me an unlucky purchaser of this paradise."

Anthony gave him the information.

"Then things are not so desperate," said Fink. "Now, listen to my proposal: things cannot go on in this way; this scanty living is unwholesome for all parties, especially for you; though the estate may be dreadfully ruined, it appears to me possible to make something of it. I will not decide whether you are the right people to keep up the property; if you have a mind to devote several years of your life to it, and to victimize yourself in future for the interests of others, it is not impossible, provided you can procure, in calmer times, the necessary capital. Meanwhile I will give you some (say five thousand) thalers, and the baron shall give me for it a mortgage on this property. This loan will not place you in a worse position, and it will help you to get over this year of madness."

Anthony rose and walked about the room uneasily. At last he exclaimed, "It won't do; we cannot accept your generous offer. Look here, Fritz: last year, before I knew these people as well as I do now, I wished extremely for our Principal to take an interest in the baron's situation, and I should then have been most happy if you had made me this offer. Now that I know the baron, and his position, I think it would be wrong by you and the ladies to accept your proposal."

"Is the couch out of Leonora's bed-room to be soiled by the tobacco-ashes of your visitor? Now I am doing it; later, it will be a Polish scytheman."

"We must go through it," answered Anthony, sorrowfully.

"You obstinate dog!" exclaimed Fink, "you shall not get rid of me; I shall beat you yet, you stiff-necked Tony."

After this conversation Fink did not again mention his proposition of a loan, but the next day he had many confidential conferences with the hussar. On the following evening, he said to the baron, "May I ask you to-morrow for your riding-horse? it is an old acquaintance of mine: I wish to ride over your fields. Do not be angry, baroness, if I do not appear at dinner."

"He is rich—he comes here to buy," said the baron to himself. "This Wohlfart has informed his friend that there is a bargain to be had here. The game is beginning; only be cautious."

## CHAPTER II.

It was a sunny day in April, one of those beautiful days when a moist warmth unfolds the buds of the trees, and quickens the pulsation of men's hearts. Leonora went, with her bonnet and parasol, from the castle to the farm, and walked in the cow-house along the row of horned heads. The cows looked at her with their large eyes, and raised their broad mouths; and here and there a frisky one lowed, asking for something good from her hand. "Is Herr Wohlfart here?" inquired Leonora of the bailiff, as she hastened past the cow-house.

"He is in the castle, Fraulein."

"His visitor is with him, I suppose?" she inquired again.

"Herr von Fink has ridden over this morning to Neudorf. He can't sit still in a room; he prefers being on horseback. He would have made an excellent officer of hussars."

When Leonora thus learnt where Herr von Fink was gone, she slowly walked over the brook and fields to the forest in another direction, in order not to meet the guest. She looked on the blue sky and on the blooming earth; the winter corn and the green blades of grass looked so gay in the bright morning sun, that her heart smiled. On the willows by the brook, spring was lying like a transparent breath; the golden sprigs were full of sap and the first leaves were bursting from the swollen buds. Even the sand to-day gave her no annoyance. With light step she crossed the broad strip which surrounded the forest, and hastened along the footpath through the fir-trees towards the forester's lodge. The world of little animals was busy humming and chirping in the wood; wherever groups of leafy trees stood under the firs, the loud warble of the finch, or eager twitter of the new-married couples of the little wood birds, was heard, quarrelling as to the branch on which they were this year to build their nests. The beetles were humming in their black cuirasses

about the buds of the beech-trees, sometimes a wild bee was buzzing which had awoke early from its winter sleep, the brown butterflies were already fluttering about the brambles, in spots where the soil was deeper the white stars of anemones and the yellow primroses were shining in the shade. Leonora took off her straw hat, and allowed the warm air to play round her temples; she inhaled deep draughts of the fragrance of the forest, which hung round the stems of the young pines; often she stopped to listen to the voices near her; she looked at the tender leaves of the trees, and stroked with her hand the white bark of the birch; she stood by the murmuring stream before the forester's house, and coaxingly passed her hand over the little firs of the fence, which stood as thick as the bristles of a brush. It seemed to her as if she had never seen the forest so alive before. The forester's dogs in the court barked fiercely; she heard the fox rattle its chain, and looked at the bullfinch hopping up and down its cage, and trying to bark like those *grandes* the dogs.

"Quiet, Hector! quiet, Bergmann!" cried out Leonora, knocking at the door. The impetuous barking of the dogs changed into a friendly greeting. When the door opened, Bergmann the terrier came waddling to meet her, wagging its tail, and Hector jumped wildly about her and smelt at her pocket; even the fox crept back into its kennel, laid its head on its trough, listening and winking slyly at her. But on the other side of the fence she saw a horse's head rising above the firs,—the very person she wished to avoid was in this solitude. She stood for a moment doubtful, and was on the point of retreating quietly, when the forester came to the door and saluted her. She could not now withdraw, so she followed the old man into his room. Fink was standing in the middle of it, lighted up by the golden sunbeams falling through the small panes. He came forward to meet her. "I have come to pay my fellow-craftsman a visit," said he, pointing to the forester, "and was just going to enjoy myself with your proud vassal in his homely dwelling." The forester brought a chair. Leonora was obliged to sit down; Fink was standing opposite to her, leaning against the dark wooden wall, looking at her with undiguised admiration. "You are a striking contrast to that old boy, and to this room," said he, looking round. "I beg you won't wave your parasol, for all these stuffed birds are only awaiting your commands, to come to life again and fly down to your feet; the heron there has already begun to raise his head."

"It is only the sunshine," said the forester, composedly.

Leonora laughed. "We know these excuses," exclaimed Fink. "You are in the plot; you are this queen's gnome. If there is no witchcraft here, I will sleep all the rest of my life. At one sign of that magic wand the roof of this large bird-cage will flap back, and you will fly with your follower out of the hut into the sunshine. There is no doubt that the tops of those fir-trees are your residence—the lofty hall on which your throne stands, mighty ruler of this lodge, fair ringletted Goddess of Spring!"

"My only comfort," said Leonora, somewhat confused, "is, that I am not the cause of your inventions, for you take a pleasure in exercising your imagination. I am only accidentally the unworthy object of your wit; you are a poet."

"Fie! how can you say such a thing of me?" exclaimed Fink. "I a poet!" Except a few rollicking sailor's songs, of which God forbid you should ever hear the words, I do not know a single poem by heart. The only things I value in poetry are some fragments of the old school; for example: "Hurrah! hurrah! hop, hop, hop!" in a poem which, if I

am not mistaken, bears your name.\* And even to this classic line I have to object, that it expresses rather the clumsy trot of some peasant's nag than the swift career of a goblin steed. However, one must not be too severe on the gentlemen of the pen. Beside this line there will be little poetry found in me; perhaps, also, the affecting rhyme of the great Schiller:—

“Zounds! I've lost my wits,  
If that's not Gustel von Blasewitz.”

There is great truth in these lines.”

“You are making sport of me,” said Leonora, offended.

“By no means,” affirmed Fink; “if it will give you any pleasure, I will willingly admit that the trifles of some poets are passable, always premising that I need not read them often. Why should people read or make poems when they experience them every day themselves? Since I have returned to the old country, hardly an hour passes that I do not see or hear things, which would intoxicate the gentlemen of the pen for a century; glorious materials for every kind of artistic skill. If I had the misfortune to be a poet, I should now have to rush out in a frenzy and go headlong into the fox's kennel, in order to compose a passionate sonnet, at a safe distance from my passion, while the fox was biting my legs; but, as I am not a gentleman of the pen, I prefer enjoying the beauty I see here, rather than describing it in rhyme.” And again he looked with admiration at the young lady.

“Leonora!” cried out a gruff voice from the further end of the room. Leonora and Fink looked round astonished.

“He has learnt it,” said the forester, pointing to the raven. “He won't learn anything else, and sits there ferocious to every creature, but yet he has learnt that.”

The raven on the stove bent his neck, and looked with sharp eyes at both the guests; he moved his beak, and seemed to mutter something to himself; now he nodded his head, and now he shook it.

“The birds are already beginning to speak,” he said, approaching the raven; “the roof will soon begin to be raised, and I shall be left alone, looking after you sorrowfully, with Bergmann and Hector. Now, sorcerer, is the water boiling?”

The forester looked at the stove. “It is boiling well,” he said; “but what next?”

“We must ask the young lady's assistance,” answered Fink. “I intend to travel on your family hack,” he said, turning to Leonora, “through the wood to the distillery, and thence further; and I have brought with me here what will serve for breakfast and dinner on the journey” (he pulled out some cakes of chocolate); “we will make something from this resembling drink. If you are not above keeping us company in our undertaking, I propose that we should mix this chocolate with the water to the best of our ability. It would be charming of you if you would give an opinion as to how we should begin.”

“Have you got a grater or a mortar?” asked Leonora of the forester, laughing.

“I have no such implements,” answered the man of the woods.

“But a hammer,” said Fink, “and a clean sheet of paper.”

The hammer was produced immediately, the sheet of paper was found after a long search. Fink undertook the task of pounding the chocolate;

\* Burger's “Leonora.”

the forester fetched fresh water from the spring, Leonora cleaned some glasses, whilst Fink hammered eagerly on the table. "This is antediluvian paper," said he, knocking; "like leather of the time when there were no paper-machines; it must have been some centuries in this enchanted hut." Leonora shook the bruised mass into the pot of water, and stirred it with a twirling-stick, then they sat down all three to the forester's table, and drank their handiwork out of the glasses with great pleasure.

The golden rays of light poured into the room, they fell upon the delicate figure of the beautiful girl, and the striking countenance of the man opposite to her; then they struck on the wall, where they adorned the head of the heron and the wings of the hawk, with a variegated lustre. The raven closed his soliloquy, fluttered from his seat, hopped to the feet of the young lady, and croaked out again, "Leonora! Leonora!"

Leonora conversed quietly with the guest; the forester put in a wise word now and then. They talked of the country and its inhabitants.

"Whenever I have met with Poles in a foreign country," said Fink, "I have always been able to get on with them. I am sorry, therefore, that this strife renders it so difficult to become acquainted with them in their own country, for we always learn to know men best when we see them within their own walls."

"It must be a great pleasure to see so many different things," said Leonora.

"It is only in the beginning that variety strikes the mind forcibly; when one has observed all sorts of people, one's last impression is, that people are everywhere very much alike. A little difference in the colour of the skin, and other small matters; but love and hatred, laughter and tears, meet the traveller at every turn; and these things are pretty much alike everywhere. Twenty weeks since, I was half a globe distant from here, in the wooden block-house of an American, on a desolate savannah: it was just like us. We were sitting at a coarse wooden table like this, and my host was looking as like this old gentleman as one egg is like another; and just as here, the rays of the winter sun fell through the little window. And if there are some things that distinguish men from one another, the women at least are in the main the same; they only differ in some trifles."

"And what are those?" asked the forester.

"A little more or less clean," said Fink. "That is the whole difference."

Leonora rose, provoked more with the tone than with the words. "It is time for me to return," she said, coldly, and put on her straw hat.

"As you rise the sunshine leaves the room," exclaimed Fink.

"It is only a small cloud passing before the sun," said the forester, approaching the window, "that causes this shadow."

"Nonsense!" answered Fink, "it is the straw hat that covers the lady's hair; the light came from those golden curls."

They left the house, the forester locked the door, and they went in different directions from the hut.

Leonora hastened home. The greenfinch chirped and the blackbird sang. She was angry with herself for having crossed the forester's threshold, and yet she could not help thinking of her visit there. The stranger made her feel uneasy and doubtful. Was he impudent? nothing seemed sacred to him. Was he overbearing in his self-reliance? Was she to be angry with him, or was her feeling of annoyance only the folly of an inexperienced girl? She put these questions to herself incessantly, and—ah! she found no answer.

When, towards evening, Anthony wished to send an order to the shepherd, neither Karl nor any messenger was to be found, and as the flock were feeding at no great distance from the castle, Anthony went himself to the shepherd, who was on the road leading to the distillery. He was not a little surprised to discover his friend Fink on horseback in the last field by the road, Karl and the bailiff busy near him. Fink galloped short distances, like a performer in a circus; the others carried black and white painted sticks, which they put into the earth and pulled out again. Karl was looking through a small telescope which he had fastened on his stick.

"Five-and-twenty bounds of my horse," exclaimed Fink.

"Two inches fall," said Karl, from behind.

"Twenty-five, two, done," said the bailiff, writing the number on his tablet.

"So you, too, are sneaking up," he cried out to his friend, laughing. "Wait a moment, we shall have done directly." A few more gallops, looks through the telescope, and notes on the tablets, then the men put their poles together, and Fink took the bailiff's tablets and counted up attentively. At length he gave the tablets back with a smile, and said, "Come higher up, Anthony; now I will show you something. Turn with your face to the north, towards the brook and the castle; then the brook, considered as a straight line, forms a cord running from west to east; the border of the wood behind you, the arc of a circle; the wood and the brook confining within them the segment of a circle."

"That is clear," said Anthony.

"In former times the brook had another course," continued Fink; "the old bed is still to be perceived round the bend of the wood. If you walk up the old channel, along the edge of the wood, you come to the point, down in the west there, where the old and the new beds separate—it is where the bad bridge leads over the brook, and where the water in its present course has a fall of more than one foot, strong enough to drive a good mill; the ruins of a small farm are close to it."

"I know the spot well enough," said Anthony.

"Below the village, the old bed winds off from the forest again back to the brook. It encloses a vast plain above five hundred morgans, if I can rely upon the bounds of my horse. The whole of this ground slopes from the old bed to the new; it contains only a few acres of meadow-land, and a little moderate arable; the greater part is sand and pasture-ground—the worst part of your property, as I hear."

"I grant all that," said Anthony, with curiosity.

"Now mark me, if the brook is brought again to its old bed, and forced to make an arc instead of a straight line, the water, which now to your shame flows out uselessly into the wide world, would irrigate the whole plain of five hundred morgans, and turn the dry sand into green meadow-land."

"You are a sharp fellow," said Anthony, excited at the discovery.

"What does the morgan cost you, on an average?" said Fink.

"Thirty thalers."

"And the utmost expense of converting this space into meadow-land, would be the same sum, put it together, sixty thalers; take three thalers for interest, add to it two thalers a-year for maintenance, taxes, et cetera, and you have five thalers expenses. If, on the other hand, you reckon twenty-hundredweights of hay from each morgan, at half-a-thaler a hundredweight, you can get five thalers clear from a morgan, or from five hundred morgan, a clear annual gain of two thousand five hundred thalers.

For that purpose an outlay of not more than fifteen thousand thalers is wanting. That, Anthony, was what I wanted to tell you."

Anthony was astonished: it could not be denied that Fink's reckoning was not visionary; neither that of the cost, or of the profit; and the prospect of advantage opened to the estate by such an improvement, occupied him so much, that he walked for a long time in profound silence by the side of his friend; he at last exclaimed sadly, "You show me water and green meadows in the desert; it is cruel of you, for the baron is not in a condition to make the improvement; but a stranger might. Fifteen thousand thalers!"

"Perhaps ten might do," said Fink, jestingly. "I have brought this vision before your eyes, to punish you for your stubbornness of last night. Now let us talk of other things."

In the evening the baron said to his wife and Leonora, "Come to my bed-room, I have something to tell you." He seated himself comfortably in his arm-chair, and said, with greater cheerfulness than he had shown for a long time. "It was easy to see that this visit of Fink's was not quite accidental, and not occasioned by friendship for Wohlfart, as the young men pretended. You were both wiser than I; but I was right. There is a motive for the visit, which affects us more nearly than our accountant." The baroness cast a look of alarm on her daughter; but Leonora opened her eyes so wide as she looked at her father, that the mother was relieved.

"And what do you think has brought the gentleman here from abroad?" continued the baron. The ladies were silent.

At last Leonora said, "Father, Herr von Fink and Wohlfart have been intimate friends for long; they have not seen each other for some years. It is natural that Fink, having a slight acquaintance with you, should take advantage of it, to spend some weeks in the company of his best friend. Why should you seek for any other reason for his presence?"

"You talk as young people always do, about such friendships; men are governed less by such fantastic feelings, and more by selfishness, than your young wisdom supposes."

"Selfishness!" exclaimed the baroness.

"What is there to be surprised at in that?" continued the baron, ironically: "both are merchants. Fink also has learnt sufficient of the charms of trade not to object to a good bargain where an opportunity offers. I will tell you why he is come here. Our excellent Wohlfart has written to him: here is an estate, and this estate has a master who is at present prevented from directing it himself. There is a bargain to be made here. You have money; come, I am your friend; something will fall to my share."

The baroness stared at her husband. But Leonora sprang up, and exclaimed, with the energy of a deeply-wounded heart, "Father, I will not hear you speak so of a man who has never shown us anything but the greatest disinterestedness. His friendship for us has gone so far that he endures, with boundless forbearance, the privations of this lonely life, and all the painful accompaniments of his position, which to many others would be unbearable."

"His friendship?" said the baron. "We have never laid claim to so high a privilege."

"We have," exclaimed Leonora, with burning zeal. "At a time when my mother found no one to help us, Wohlfart was the only person who kept faithful to us; he alone has taken care of us and of your interests,

from the day that my brother Eugene introduced him to us, up to this hour."

"Well," said the baron, deprecatingly, "I say nothing against his zeal. I acknowledge that he keeps great order in the accounts, and shows great devotion for very small pay. If you understood men better, you would take my words more quietly. After all, there is nothing wrong in what he has done," he added, in a quieter tone. "I am in want of capital; and you know that I am still embarrassed. What objection is there to others making proposals to me, which bring advantage to them, and do me no injury?"

"For God's sake, father, what propositions? It is not true that Wohlfart attends to any interest but yours."

The mother, by a movement of her hand, desired Leonora to be silent, "If Fink desires to buy the estate, I should bless that resolution as a happiness for you, as the greatest happiness that could now come to you, dear Oscar."

"There is no question of buying as yet," answered the baron. "I should, with the present prospects, even doubt about giving up the estates so readily. Fink has made me another proposition; he wishes to become my tenant."

Leonora sank speechless on a chair.

"He wishes to rent five hundred morgans of my ground, to form into water-meadows. I cannot deny that he spoke to me frankly, and as a man of honour. He has proved to me by figures how great his profit will be; he has offered to pay down the rent at once for the first few years; indeed, he has also offered to give up the lease at the end of five years, and restore the meadows to me, if I return him the cost of the outlay."

"Good God! and you have rejected this generous offer?" cried out Leonora.

"I have asked for time to consider," said the baron, with self-complacency: "the offer is, as I said, not exactly disadvantageous to me; but it would not be prudent to grant a stranger so great an advantage for five years: if there were a hope that within the next year I should have money enough to make this improvement on my own account——"

"You could never do it yourself, my poor dear husband," exclaimed the baroness with tears, throwing her hand over his eyes. The baron sank down as if crushed, and laid his head like a child upon her breast.

"I must learn whether Wohlfart knows of this plan," cried out Leonora, resolutely, "and what he says to it, if you will allow me, father; I will send for him to come here directly." As the baron made no answer, she rang for the servant, and left the room to await him at the door.

Fink was sitting in Anthony's room, busily occupied in scolding his friend. "Since you have left off smoking cigars, your good genius has left you, after having torn off all his hair in despair at your want of spirit. In former times you used to have an hour that you could dawdle away. Now you are at your eternal book-keeping, and, by Tantalus! to no good."

The servant entered, and called Anthony to the baron. When Anthony was at the door, Fink called out after him, "By the way, I have offered to rent the five hundred morgans of the baron. Two and a-half thalers rent for the morgan: after five years the meadows to be given up, if the outlay is repaid; payment to be made in ready-money or mortgage. Now go, my youth."

When Anthony entered the baron's room the baroness was sitting by the side of her husband, holding his hand in hers; Leonora walking about in troubled mood.



"Did you hear of the proposal that Herr von Fink has made my father?" she asked.

"He has this moment told me," answered Anthony. The baron smiled ironically.

"And what is your opinion; can my father accept the offer?"

Anthony was silent. "It is advantageous for the property," he said, at last, with self-restraint. "The proposed improvement would be the best chance of maintaining it."

"That is not what I wished to know," answered Leonora, impatiently; "but whether you, as our friend, advise that this proposal should be accepted."

"No," said Anthony.

"I knew that you would say so," said Leonora, and stepped behind her father's chair.

"You say no," asked the baron: "and why, if you please?"

"The present time, when everything is doubtful, appears to me little suited for so great a speculation. Besides that, I believe that Fink has been led to make this offer by considerations which do honour to himself, but which must make the acceptance of his proposals difficult to you, my lord baron."

"You must give me leave to decide for myself what I can accept, and what I cannot. The undertaking would be, as a business, advantageous to both parties."

"I grant that," said Anthony.

"And with regard to the present state of political affairs, it is a matter of personal opinion. A man who does not allow himself to be disturbed by it in his plans, deserves more praise than another, who neglects doing useful things from a vague fear."

"I grant that also."

"Would the consequence of this undertaking be that Herr von Fink would take up his residence in our country?" asked the baroness.

"I think not, honoured lady; the work would be put into the hands of technical men, and his lively spirit would soon drive him back into the world. I can only guess at the motives which induce him to make this offer to the baron. I believe that the respect which he has for your family, and the wish to be near you, and me also, in these troubled days, has the greatest share in it. The danger that makes this country disagreeable to others, is exactly what attracts his daring spirit."

"And would it not be agreeable to you, if your friend were to stay here?" asked the baroness.

"I had no hope of it till to-day," replied Anthony. "In former times, it was often my task to keep him from rash decisions, in which he would stake much for the sake of a whim."

"Then you call your friend's proposition rash?" said the baron.

"His offer is a risk to himself," answered Anthony, with emphasis; "and there is something in it which does not please me, as regards your own interest, though I should be puzzled to say what it is."

"We thank you," said the baron, "and will not trouble you farther to-night; there is no hurry in the matter."

Anthony bowed and left the room.

Leonora stood silent by the window, and cast a lingering look upon Anthony as he departed.

"I should be puzzled to say what it is," she said, repeating Anthony's words: and a host of anxious visions and forebodings passed through her mind. She was angry at her father's weakness: she was indignant with

Fink, who had offered them charity. Whether her father accepted or declined, their relation to their guest had altered. They were under obligation to him; he was no longer a stranger to them; he had intruded himself as confidant into their most secret sorrows. She thought of the contemptuous motion of his lips—of his contracted brow, and she heard him sneering at her and her father. He had flippantly entered the house, and after a few days, with an air of indifference, and as if in joke, tried to seize the reins, in order to guide their fate according to his will. Her parents would, perhaps, have to owe their preservation to his overbearing humour. This day she had been able to joke with him, the brilliant man of the world; he was a guest, with whom she had been on an equal footing; but how would she be able to look at him to-morrow? From that day he would become superior to her; and her father, in fact, would be his subject.

Her pride revolted against his character, the power of which she felt so strongly in this hour; she determined to treat him with coldness: she meditated over the words which he would address to her, and her answer, and her mind was always fluttering about the image of the strong-minded stranger, as the scared bird flutters about the enemy that approaches its nest.

"And what will you do, Oscar?" asked the baroness.

"My father cannot accept," exclaimed Leonora, energetically.

"What is your opinion?" asked the baron, turning to his wife.

"Choose whatever will free you soonest from this place; whatever will release you from the anxieties, sorrows, and uncertainties, which torment you secretly every hour. Let us go to some distant place where passions are less violent, far, far away from this land. In the most straitened circumstances we shall be more comfortable than here."

"So you advise me to accept his proposal," said the baron. "He who rents a portion may very likely take the whole."

"And pay us a pension," exclaimed Leonora.

"You are a silly girl," said the father. "You both excite yourselves, which is useless. The proposal is too important to be abruptly declined, or accepted, in a hurry. I will reflect on the details. Your Wohlfart will have an opportunity of looking over the conditions," he added more good-humouredly.

"Listen to what Wohlfart tells you, my father, and respect what he conceals from you."

"Yes, I will listen to him," concluded the baron. "Now, good-night to you both. I will think of it."

"He will accept," said Leonora, when in her mother's room; "he will accept because Wohlfart advises him against it, and because the other offers him money. Mother, why did you not tell him that we could not look the stranger in the face, if he doles out alms to us in our own house?"

"I have no pride, no hope, now," whispered the mother.

When Anthony returned slowly to his room, Fink called out gaily to him, "How goes it, Herr Agent? am I to become a tenant, or will the baron make the improvements himself? He was much disposed to do it: in that case, I shall lay claim to finder's reward, board for me and my horse as long as you play at war here."

"He will accept your proposal," answered Anthony; "though I advised him against it."

"You?" asked Fink. "Yes; that is just like you. When a drown-

ing man clings to a log of wood, you make him a speech on the weight of moral obligations, and pull it away from him."

"You are not as innocent as a log of wood," said Anthony, laughing against his will.

"Hear me," continued Fink; "I have no superfluous sentimentality; but in such a case, I should not think it an act of friendship if you were to edify me with a lecture. Is it, then, so disagreeable to you that I should help you to get through this mad time?"

"I know you long enough, you rogue," said Anthony, "to be aware that your friendship for me is one great motive for your offer."

"Truly!" said Fink, jokingly; "and how far was it a motive? These are worthless times: however virtuously one may act, one is sure to be dissected, till virtue turns into selfishness under the knife of malice."

Anthony stroked his cheeks. "I don't dissect you," he said. "You have made a generous offer; and I am not dissatisfied with you, but with myself. In the first joy of your arrival, I told you more concerning the baron's affairs, and the secret sorrows of the ladies, than was consistent with my duty. I myself have initiated you into the secrets of this house, and you have used this knowledge in your hardy way. Thus I have connected you with this family, and your capital with this turbulent country. That this should have happened so suddenly hurts my feelings; and I am annoyed at having occasioned it."

"Of course," said Fink, laughing, "your sweetest enjoyment is worrying yourself about your friends."

"It has happened to me twice," continued Anthony, "in spite of the caution for which you so often laugh at me, to have spoken unguardedly to friends about this family. The first time, I begged for help, and it was refused; and this refusal, more than anything else, drove me from the office to this house. Now my second indiscretion brings help unasked: what will be the result?"

"That it will send you out of the house, into the office again," said Fink, laughing. "Whoever saw such a subtle Hamlet in greased boots? If I could but find out whether you are secretly longing for, or afraid of such a logical result!" He took a piece of money out of his pocket. "Heads or tails, Anthony: blonde or black, let us toss!"

"You are no longer in Tennessee, you soul-seller," answered Anthony, laughing in spite of himself.

"It shall be fair play," said Fink, good-humouredly, replacing the piece of money in his pocket; "I will give you the choice. Think of it."

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### CHAPTER III.

THE baron accepted. In fact, it was difficult to withstand Fink's offer. Anthony himself acknowledged that it was hardly possible to refuse, after it had been seriously proposed. The baron, however, did not arrive at this decision by the straight line that common sense usually takes in matters of worldly interest. His mind made many twists and turns: it was always occurring to him, that a stranger was for some years to make a considerable profit from his estate; and when, with a sigh, he owned to himself the impossibility of averting this loss, the idea crossed his mind how pressing the stranger had been in making such a proposal the third day after his arrival, and that Leonora's objection to it must have some foundation. Then he appeared to himself, wretched and dependent on others

and under Anthony's tutelage, and in his bitterness came almost to the conclusion of giving up the matter. However, after these ebullitions he wavered, and at last returned again to the road that led to profit. He knew well what a help the advance of the rent would be for the coming year, he anticipated that the improvement would in a few years double the worth of the estate. Indeed, he allowed that Fink himself would be a valuable ally in the troubles of that year. Towards the ladies he observed a stubborn silence: he parried Leonora's attempts to dissuade him, by an extraordinary flow of good humour. His whole character seemed improved during this period of consideration.

After some days he called his old servant, and said to him, in strict confidence, "Watch, John, if Herr Wohlfart goes out in the course of the day: and if Herr von Fink is alone in his room, then announce my visit to him, and fetch me."

When he had been secretly conveyed into Fink's room, he said to him, in the most civil manner, that he accepted his proposal, and would leave it to him to draw up the agreement with the lawyer in Rosmin.

"Done," cried Fink, shaking him by the hand; "but have you considered, my dear baron, that in consequence of your kindly accepting my proposal, you oblige me to ask you to extend your hospitality to me for weeks, perhaps months? For I consider my presence will be desirable, at least till the work is set agoing."

"It will be a great pleasure to me," answered the baron, sincerely, "if you will be content with our housekeeping, which is not yet on a good footing. If you will allow me, I will have some rooms in this wing made habitable for you, and placed at your disposal. If you have a servant to whom you are accustomed, I beg you to send for him."

"No servant," said Fink; "if you will allow your John to keep my room in order. But I have something better, from which I should not like to be parted for long, a horse that is standing in my father's stable."

"Would it not be possible to have it brought here?"

"If you will allow me, I should be much obliged to you," said Fink.

Thus the two talked over their connection in the most friendly terms, and the baron left Fink's room, with the feeling that he had done a clever thing.

"It is all right," said Fink to Anthony, as he entered; "now don't lament, but make up your mind to it, as the mischief is done. I shall be quartered in two rooms at the corner of this wing, the fitting up I will take care of myself. To-morrow I go to Rosmin, and from thence, further on. I am on the track of a clever man who will direct the technical part of the work: I shall bring him and several workmen with me. Can you allow me to have Karl for a week?"

"It will be difficult to do without him; but if it must be, I will endeavour to replace him: only, leave me a bundle of wise lessons instead."

The following morning Fink set out accompanied by the hussar, and the old order of things resumed its place in the castle. The little troop of the estate militia exercised regularly; they made patrols as before; horrid rumours were eagerly reported and listened to; one day information came that a division of scythemen were marching along the nearest road; another day a troop of hostile riders invaded the boundaries, but rode by, on the forest road, without touching the village; some soldiers also made their appearance, and were quartered for the night—small divisions, who were going further on into the country. The officers were welcome guests at the castle: they gave accounts of the struggle beyond

the forest, and calmed the ladies by bold assurances that the insurrection would be brought rapidly to an end.

Anthony alone felt the burden laid on the farm by these small military visits.

Almost fourteen days had passed since Fink and Karl had disappeared. One sunny day Leonora was occupied with her shrubbery: she had holes dug by a workman, for some young forest-trees. Already half a hundred firs and young birches formed a modest grove, which actually gave shade to a partridge, but not to a man. Leonora, in her straw hat, with her little spade in her hand, looked so graceful that Anthony could not help stopping to gaze at her.

"Have I got you at last, you faithless gentleman? for a whole week you have not looked at my trees. I have been obliged to water them all by myself. Here is your spade, come and help me to dig some holes."

Anthony obediently took the spade and began valiantly to dig up the turf. "I have seen some young junipers in the wood, perhaps you can make use of them."

"On the borders," answered Leonora, appeased.

"During the last fortnight I have had more to do than usual," continued Anthony; "Karl is missed everywhere."

Leonora pushed her spade deep into the ground, and bent down as if to feel the earth that had been turned up. "Has your friend never written to you?" she asked with indifference.

"I don't know what to think," said Anthony; "the post has not been interrupted, for other letters have come: I almost fear that some misfortune has befallen the travellers."

Leonora shook her head. "Can you imagine that Herr von Fink could meet with any misfortune?" she asked, digging on.

"It is difficult to imagine," said Anthony, laughing; "he does not look as if he would easily let any ill luck overtake him."

"That is what I mean," answered Leonora, drily.

Anthony was silent for awhile. "It is strange that we have not yet spoken together concerning the alteration which Fink's stay will occasion here," he said at last in a constrained manner, for he had a vague feeling that a reserve had arisen of late between him and Leonora, like a light shadow on the sunny green turf, which one cannot account for. "You are not annoyed at his settling here?" Leonora turned away and let a branch slip through her fingers.

"Are you pleased?" she asked in return.

"For my own part, I am well pleased at the presence of my friend," said Anthony.

"Then I am also," answered Leonora, looking up. "But at any rate it is very strange that Herr Sturm has not written, perhaps they will not come back again at all."

"I can answer for Karl," said Anthony.

"But for the other, he looks as if he were as changeable as a cloud."

"Not he," answered Anthony, "when he has difficulties to conquer, all his energies awaken; it is only things that give him no trouble that bore him."

Leonora did not answer, but went on digging.

Suddenly they heard the buzz of merry voices from the farmyard: the men ran from their dinner to the high road. "Herr Sturm is coming," called out a ploughboy to the diggers.

A respectable procession was moving from the village to the castle. In front half-a-dozen men were walking dressed alike: they wore grey

jackets, broad-brimmed felt hats turned up on one side and ornamented with a green tuft: on their shoulders they carried a light musket, and a cutlass at their side. Behind then came a series of loaded carts, the first full of spades, shovels, hoes, hatchets, and wheelbarrows, which were arranged with artistic symmetry; behind these again other waggons with sacks of flour, boxes, bundles of clothes, and packed furniture. The procession was closed by another set of men in grey uniforms and the same weapons. When near the castle, Karl jumped out of the last waggon with a stranger, and placed himself at the head of the procession, made the waggons drive up to the castle, ranged their men in two ranks, and gave the word of command, "Present arms!" with some success. Fink galloped up behind the train.

"Welcome!" cried Anthony to his friend.

"You are bringing an army with baggage," said Leonora, laughing and saluting him. "Do you always take the field with so small baggage?"

"I am bringing a corps that from this day forth shall be at your service," answered Fink, springing from his horse. "They seem to be good sort of fellows," said he, turning to Anthony; "they are to form my gang of workmen, but I have had some trouble to collect them; hands are very scarce now, though there is no work. We have been drumming and decoying in your district here like recruiting-officers: they would hardly have come merely to work; the grey jackets and hunting hats did it: there are some old soldiers amongst them; your hussar knows how to manage them like a born general."

The baron and his wife entered the open hall. At Karl's command the workmen gave them three cheers, then they marched to the front of the house and encamped in the sun.

"Here are your pioneers, my general," said Fink, after his first greetings to the baron; "as you have the kindness to allow me to become an inmate of your house for some time to come, it has given me the right to assist in protecting your castle. Things look critical in this province; in Rosmin itself they do not feel secure for a single day. The organization of your village militia has not escaped the observation of the enemy, and has drawn their attention to your house."

"It is an honour to me to displease these gentlemen."

"Certainly," agreed Fink, civilly; "so much the more, therefore, are your devoted followers bound to watch over the personal security of yourself and family. As yet you have been scarcely strong enough to guard the castle against the eccentric fancies of your own villagers. The dozen workmen whom I bring can form a guard for your house; they have weapons, and to a certain extent know how to use them. I have engaged the men under regulations, which have a sufficient touch of martial law to assist in keeping them in order. They are every day to take some hours from their work for exercising, to form patrols, and to keep up regular communication with the neighbourhood, as far as you, baron, think good. The pay and fare of the men are of course my business. I wish to put together a slight house for them in the field; till then it will be necessary to keep the men together, if possible near the castle, and therefore I beg of you to give temporary quarters to these men."

"Whatever you wish, dear Fink," the baron cried, enraptured with the enterprising spirit of his young companion; "every place we have shall be at your disposal."

"May I then venture to propose," said Anthony, "to arrange a room in the lower story of the castle for a guard-room? There the arms and tools of the men may be kept, and every night some of them can be on

duty. 'The rest must be lodged in the farm; by this means the men will get into the habit of considering the castle as their place of meeting.'

"Excellent," said Fink, "provided the ladies will not be angry at the noise that it will occasion in the castle."

"The wife and daughter of an old soldier will accept the measures taken for their safety with the greatest gratitude," answered the baron with dignity.

Thus the settlement of the new colony was readily taken in hand by all parties. The loaded waggons were unpacked, the engineer and the workmen found a temporary abode in the farm.

The first occupation of the workmen was to unfold the linen and straw ropes from the furniture, and to carry it to the room of their new employer. The servants of the castle were standing round, looking curiously at the simple articles; but one piece excited such loud admiration, that Leonora herself approached the group. It was a small sofa of marvellous appearance, the legs and arms were the feet of a large beast of prey, the seat was covered with the skin of the same feline animal, a yellow brown ground with regular black spots; for the back and sides there were three huge cats' heads turned into cushions; the frame, instead of wood, was of finely-carved ivory.

"How charming!" exclaimed Leonora.

"If the thing doesn't displease you," said Fink, with a tone of indifference, "I propose to you an exchange. There is a small divan in my room which is so comfortable that I should like to keep it; will you allow the men to deposit this monster in some other room, and leave the divan with me?"

Leonora felt so confused at his abrupt manner, that she did not immediately answer, but she bowed a silent assent. However, she was dissatisfied with herself afterwards for not having at once declined the exchange. When she went to her room she found the cat sofa placed there. This made her still more angry; she called to Suska and the man servant to place the piece of furniture in any other room; but they both protested, and made such a noise, maintaining that the splendid beast could not be in a better place than the young lady's room, that Leonora at length, not to make a scene, sent them both out, and patiently suffered the exchange. So Leonora's beautiful person rested on the jaguar skins, killed by Fink in a far-distant land.

On the following day the new work began, the surveyor of the meadows went into the fields, and the men were set to work. Karl looked out for day labourers in the German and Polish villages, and in their own village some persons appeared willing to work. After a few days fifty labourers were busy on the tenant's land, though it must be remarked, by the way, not without some interruptions; the men were restless and unsettled, and the workmen from the neighbouring villages were less regular than might be wished; but the gang remained steady, and Fink's arrangement stood the test, because he, as well as Karl, knew how to control the men—he by his proud energy, Karl by the good-humour with which he praised and scolded. The forester came regularly forth from his wood to direct the military drilling, the castle was every night furnished with sentries, and the patrols to the neighbouring villages were punctually performed. The warlike spirit spread from the castle over the whole German neighbourhood; in the troop with the cocked hats an *esprit de corps* soon arose, which assisted the military discipline, and in a few days Fink was beset with innumerable applications from people desirous of being enrolled among his guards, and provided with dress, muskets, good fare, and pay.

"The guard-room is in order," Fink said to Anthony; "let loop-holes be cut in the window-boards of the lower story."

In this manner they bore the burden of the times with fresh courage; the guest infused new character into the life of every individual: the farm also felt his presence, and the forester was proud of doing the honours of the wood to such a gentleman. Fink was much in the fields with Anthony, and the latter as well as Karl got into the habit of asking his advice. He bought a pair of strong carriage-horses for his own comfort and for the meadows, as he said; but he made them work hard for the farm, and laughed at his friend when he opened a special account for the use of the two horses, and wrote down every week the number of days they worked. Anthony himself was happy in the society of his friend; something of the joyous old time had returned, those evenings when the young men had chatted together as only young men can—now childish nonsense, now wisely on the highest objects. Fink had changed in many things; he had become quieter, and, as Anthony said in his office language, "more solid." But, on the other hand, he was still more inclined than formerly to make use of others for his own changing interests, and to look down on them as his tools. His energy was still the same. After having stood all the morning with his labourers, and walked through the wood with the forester; after having, against Anthony's advice, taken rides of many miles into the unsafe country to obtain news, or to make new connexions; and after having on his way back visited all the posts on the property and freehold villages, he was still, in the evening, a gay companion at the baroness's tea-table, where he held out unwearied, and had often to be reminded, by a hint from Anthony, that the powers of the lady of the house were not as indestructible as his own. As to the baron, he very soon conquered him. He did not show the least indulgence to the bilious temper which had become habitual to the poor gentleman—he did not allow any bitter remark, or cut, at Wohlfart, or at his own daughter—to pass without making him feel at once how wrong it was; thus he managed, so that at least in his presence the baron controlled himself.

In return, he put himself out of his way to show him many kindnesses. He taught him to play at whist, by making little holes in the cards which he could feel with his fingers; he brought Leonora to the whist-table and taught her the rudiments of the game, and as a matter of course Anthony was included in the party. Thus he helped the baron over many tedious hours, and managed so that his friend spent all his evenings with the family, and, therefore, had not gone to bed when Fink fancied a nightly chat, and wished for the enjoyment of a glass of cogniac punch and a cigar in his society.

The ladies of the castle alone did not seem to find the advantages which all the others derived from Fink's presence; the baroness was ill; it was not a violent illness, but it used to come on suddenly. In the afternoon she would talk cheerfully to Anthony, and receive letters from him, which the postman had brought for the baron; but in the evening she did not appear at the tea-table. The baron, however, considered her indisposition as temporary. She complained of nothing but weakness; the physician who had ventured to come to the castle from Rosmin could not say what her illness was; with a smile she declined all medicine, and expressed her own conviction that this temporary weakness would pass away. In order not to keep Leonora and her husband in her sick-room, she expressed sometimes a wish to pass the evenings with the family, and was obliged then to lie on the sofa.



Thus she was a quiet companion to the others: her eyes rested uneasily on the baron, and searchingly on Leonora, till they both sat down to the card-table; then she leant back on her cushions, and seemed to rest as if from labour.

Anthony felt the deepest sympathy for the invalid. When there was a pause in the rubber, he never failed to go gently to the sofa to inquire whether she wanted anything, and it was a pleasure to him if he was allowed to fetch her a glass of water, or perform any other commission for her. He always looked with admiration at her delicate countenance, which, though now pale and worn, still showed its beautiful outline. There was a tacit understanding between him and the invalid. She talked to him even less than to the others; for whilst to her husband she often spoke gaily, and followed the conversation of the guest with her eyes, she did not attempt to conceal her weakness from Anthony. When with him she ceased to exert herself, gazing vacantly about the room; but if her eyes fell upon him, it was with the quiet confidence one accords to an old friend, from whom there are no secrets to be hid. Perhaps it was because the baroness thoroughly appreciated the sterling worth of his heart; perhaps, also, because, from the time that he had offered her his services, to that day, she had always considered him as the most trustworthy servant of their house. But if even our hero had remarked this, it would not have lessened his chivalrous devotion to the noble lady. In his eyes she was perfect and faultless, an image that rejoiced the heart of all who approached her. He could not help suspecting that some external influence—perhaps one of the letters which he had himself given her the day she was taken ill—had brought on the change in her health; for the address of one of those letters had been written by a trembling hand, the letter had a suspicious aspect, and Anthony had a foreboding that it contained unwelcome news. One evening, when the others were playing at the card-table, the head of the invalid had slipped from the silk cushion; when Anthony had rearranged the cushion, and the invalid had again laid her head upon it, she looked at him gratefully, and, after whispering how weak she was, added, “I wish to speak with you alone—not now, but the time will come.” So saying, she raised her eyes with an expression of the deepest grief, which filled Anthony with sorrowful apprehensions.

Neither the baron nor Leonora were much alarmed. “Mamma has suffered from weakness like this several times,” said Leonora; “the summer air was always the best remedy; I hope everything from the warm weather.” Leonora herself was too much preoccupied to observe very closely those who were about her. She, too, was altered. Many evenings she sat silent at the tea-table, and started if the conversation was directed to her; other evenings she was extravagantly gay. She avoided Fink, but she avoided Anthony also; she was constrained with both of them. Her blooming health seemed to be shaken, and her mother was often obliged to drive her out of the sick-room. Then she had her horse saddled, and rode alone into the wood, where she strolled about for hours, and was hardly aware when the indignant pony carried her back, without waiting for orders, to the farmyard. Anthony saw this change with silent sorrow. He felt deeply that there was a difference in the relation between himself and Leonora, but he avoided speaking to her on the subject, and shut up his feelings within his own heart.

It was a sultry afternoon in May; heavy thunder-clouds were hanging over the woods, and the sun cast its hot rays on the dry ground. Suddenly!

a man who had been sent out as a patrol to the freehold villages came hastily back to the guard-room at the castle, and announced that strangers were lurking in the forest of Kunau, and the Kunau men wanted to know what they were to do. Fink gave the alarm-signal to the workmen, and sent word to the forester and to the new farm. Whilst the workmen were carrying their implements to the castle, and the ploughmen rode home with their teams from the fields, and were preparing for a march, a man on horseback came galloping from Kunau, with the news that a Polish band had broken into a farm of the village, and the yeomen begged for help.

All the men were in that state of excitement which an alarm calls forth when there is a chance of an adventure.

"Keep some of the workmen back," said Fink to Anthony, "and take charge of the guard of the castle and village; send the forester with the village militia to Kunau. I will ride in advance with the bailiff and ploughman." He darted off to the stable, and saddled his horse, whilst Karl brought out the baron's for himself. "Look at the clouds, Herr von Fink," said Karl; "take your cloak; there will be a heavy storm to-night; it will rain oats for the farm." Fink called for his plaid, and the little troop rattled off for Kunau.

When they came to the wood, they remarked how stifflingly sultry it was; even the rapid motion of the horses could not do away with the uncomfortable feeling. "Do you observe the uneasiness of the horses?" exclaimed Karl. "My horse pricks up his ears; there is somebody in the wood." The riders halted. "There is some one trotting through the underwood; the branches rustle." The horse which Karl rode pushed its nose into the wood, and neighed aloud.

"It is a friend, one of our people," said Fink, looking at the horse. The branches of the brushwood divided, and Leonora, rushing out on her pony, crossed their path, and called out, laughing, "Halt!"

"Zounds, the Fraulein!" exclaimed Karl.

"The watchword," cried out Leonora, martially.

Fink advanced, and, giving her a military salute, said in a low voice,

"Zounds! I've lost my wits,  
If it is not Gustel von Blasewitz!"

Leonora coloured and laughed. "All right; I accompany you."

"Of course," cried Fink. "Forward!"

The pony threw out its little legs with all its power, to keep up with the guest's large horse. Thus they arrived in Kunau, and pulled up at the alarm-house. The village militia were placed there. The smith, as commander, came sorrowfully to meet them.

"There are desperate people hid in our wood," he cried out; "armed Poles. To-day, in broad daylight, about noon, a troop of ten men, armed with muskets, came to Leonhard's farm, which is situated down there towards the wood. They beset the entrances to the yard, and then the leader, with his band, entered the room where the people were just sitting down to dinner, and demanded money and the calf in the stable. He was a hideous fellow, with a long musket, a peacock's feather in his hat, and red lace on his coat, like a true Klopice. The yeoman at first refused to give the money, whereupon they held their guns to his head, and his wife, in an agony, flew to the chest, and flung out a bag of money to the fellows. Then they dragged the calf out of the stable, seized four geese out of the yard, and went off with their prey to the wood. Four of the rogues, with their muskets, were left in the yard as guards, to prevent any one going

out till the others had got safe to the woods. Finally, two of the robbers fired their weapons into the roof, and then all four rushed away. The roof began to burn a little, but we succeeded in putting it out."

"Hours have passed since," said Fink; "the villains are far away."

"I don't think so," answered the smith. "I sent Leonhard directly with our horsemen round the wood, as far as the boundary, that they might watch whether the thieves slipped out of the wood, and a woman from Neudorf, who was in the forest, saw two Polish folk about two hours ago, on the boundary between the Neudorf wood and ours, just where the boundary stone stands, under the old oak. They had an animal with them; the woman did not see, in her fright, whether it was a calf or a dog; so they probably preferred eating it to carrying it off. I have just come from Neudorf. The people there are collected as we are. We should like to have a chase after them through the woods, if your men would help us, and you would kindly take the lead."

"Good," said Fink; "come along, then."

He sent a messenger to meet the forester, to desire him, with the men from the castle, to drive the wood from their side; and discussed with the smith the disposition and direction of the Kunau men. He sent Karl with the ploughman to join the Kunau horse, on the opposite side of the wood, whither the chase was likely to go. "Have no formalities with the rogues," cried he to Karl, as he was setting off; and he tapped on the pistols in his holster. "Forward!" he said to the smith; "I shall myself ride to Neudorf. When you have reached the front of your wood, wait for us. The chain of Neudorf men shall join you there."

Thus the Kunau men marched off to revenge the theft. Fink galloped, accompanied by Leonora, to the next village. On the road, he said to her, "Here we shall part, Fraulein."

Leonora gave no answer. Fink looked at her askance. "I do not think," he continued, "that the rogues will give us the pleasure of waiting for us in the wood; and, as night is approaching, if they try to escape, we shall hardly be able to prevent them; but the chase is good practice for our men, and is therefore welcome to us."

"Then I will go into the woods with you," said Leonora, decidedly.

"That is not exactly necessary," answered Fink; "not that I fear any danger for you, but fatigue, and perhaps rain."

"Let me come," said Leonora, looking at him beseechingly.

"I have given you reasonable advice; more cannot be expected from any man; and, between ourselves, I will say, that I rejoice in your being so brave. Gallop! my comrade."

In Neudorf, Fink placed their horses in the constable's yard, and led the troop of villagers to the skirt of the wood. The chain was placed; the searching of the forest began. The men entered the wood in a long line, but the distance between the individuals was greater than was desirable. Fink, with Leonora, marched on the extreme of the right wing, where the junction with the Kunau men was to be effected, and Fink's neighbour was to give the directions. The men advanced in deep silence, looking keenly from one tree to another. When they entered the wood the breeze was rustling in the tops of the trees, and between the gaps of the firs they saw the leaden sky. There was still the same sultry heat below; the birds sat cowering on the branches, the beetles crept under the blackberries.

"The sky itself seems to come to the assistance of the rogues," said Fink to his companion, pointing to the clouds; "it is getting so dark that in half an hour we shall not see ten paces before us."

The wood became thicker, and the daylight diminished, and Leonora had difficulty in distinguishing the file of men. The ground became boggy, and she sank up to her ankles in the marsh.

"I hope it won't give you cold," said Fink, laughing.

"It will not," answered she, bravely. But the storm passing through the wood no longer appeared to her as harmless as it did an hour before.

The man next to Fink halted. His faint signal passed along the chain, and the long line stopped to wait for the men of Kunau. It became more and more black over the trees, and more and more dark in the wood; the thunder rolled in the distance; it sounded under the great roof of fir-trees like the dull beating of a drum. In this manner the men stood full a quarter of an hour. Then a low call sounded from the right through the darkness: the men from Kunau had arrived. The warning, "Every man keep his right and left neighbour in sight!" flew along the line. Then the whole rank moved on; the leaders from the two villages marched together. Fink and Leonora in their tracks. Suddenly there came a loud clap of thunder over the wood, the wind whistled and rustled in the trees, and the rain poured down; first it was heard only on the branches, but soon the heavy drops penetrated to the ground. The rain sounded louder and louder on the tops of the trees, and the drops from the branches became heavier; at last it rushed like a flood from the heavens, through the branches down to the ground. Every stem, every branch of fir, every twig, was changed into a gutter. The falling drops veiled the view like a curtain of gauze; the darkness and falling rain closed like a narrow circle round each individual. The men called to one another, with suppressed voices, in order not to lose the direction.

Leonora, whilst looking up at Fink, struck her foot against the root of a tree; she suppressed a cry of pain, and sank on her knee. Fink hastened to her.

"I cannot go further," she said, trying to repress an expression of pain. "Leave me, I beseech you, and call for me as you return."

"It is impossible to leave you in this situation," exclaimed Fink. "It would be a barbarity, in comparison of which cannibalism would be innocent play. You must put up with my presence. First allow me to take you from those tree gutters, to a place where the rain will not be so obtrusive. I have, at all events, lost sight of our front men; I do not see a bit of the broad shoulders of the honest lads." He raised Leonora up. She endeavoured to walk with her wounded foot, but cried out from the pain. She staggered and leant against Fink's shoulder. He folded his plaid round her, lifted her from the ground, and carried her in his arms, wrapt up as one carries a child, and placed her under some fir-trees, the thick branches of which enclosed a little sheltered spot, where a person stooping down could find a tolerable protection.

"You must sit down here, dear young lady," said Fink, placing Leonora carefully on the ground. "I shall remain on duty before your green house, and turn my back, that you may bind your wet handkerchief round your ankle." Leonora stooped under the firs, and Fink placed himself against the stem of a tree. "I hope nothing is broken," he said, "Can you move the joint of your foot?"

"It gives me pain," answered Leonora; "but I can move it."

"That is all right," said Fink, over his shoulder. "Now tie the handkerchief round it. I hope in ten minutes you will be able to walk on it. Wrap the plaid close round you, it will keep you warm; otherwise my fellow-soldier will get a fever, and the hunt after the stolen calf will cost too much. Have you done the bandage? May I turn round?"

"Yes," said Leonora.

"Then permit me to wrap you up." In vain she protested against this piece of chivalry. Fink wound the large plaid round her whole body, as she sat, and fastened it with a strong knot. "Now sit there like a grey mannikin."

"Leave a bit of my face free," begged Leonora.

"It is done," said Fink; "now you will feel comfortable."

Leonora soon felt an agreeable warmth; she sat silent under the branches, troubled at her strange situation. Fink had again taken his place by the stem of the tree, and turned his back chivalrously to her. After a while Leonora cried out from her thicket, "Are you still there, my comrade?"

"Do you take me for a traitor who abandons his chum?" asked Fink.

"It is quite dry here," said Leonora; "only an occasional drop falls on my nose. But you, poor gentleman, outside there, are getting quite wet through. What a fearful rain!"

"Does this rain inspire you with terror?" asked Fink, shrugging up his shoulders, "It is only like a weak child: when it has pulled a branch from a tree, it thinks it has done wonders. I respect the rain of those countries where the sun burns hotter; drops like apples—no, no longer drops, but waterspouts, as thick as one's arm; the water rushes from the clouds like a cataract; you cannot keep your feet, for the ground floats away under you; nor can you take shelter under trees, for the storm shatters the biggest trees like stalks of straw; you run towards a house that is not farther off than from you to the root which has hurt your foot, and the house is gone, and in its place you find a hole, a stream, or a heap of rocks that have been floated there; perhaps the ground begins to shake a little, and heaves in waves like the sea in a storm. That is rain that is worth seeing. Clothes that have been soaked in it never get dry. What was a great-coat, a week after is a black shapeless mass, which looks like the moisture of a moril. If you keep such a coat on, it sticks fast enough, the cuffs at the elbows, and the waist round the neck; but you are never able to take it off again, except with the help of a penknife, in small strips, which you cut like the peel of an apple."

Leonora could not help laughing, in spite of her pain. "I should like," she said, "for once to see such rain."

"I am unselfish enough not to wish to see you in such a condition," answered Fink. "Women come off worst; all they consider as toilet disappears completely in such a torrent. Do you know the costume of Frau Venus von Milo?"

"No," answered Leonora, alarmed.

"Well, every lady caught by a tropical rain looks like her, and the men like scarecrows. Nay, it is said that men have been beaten by such rain as flat as a copper penny, only with a button in the middle, which on being looked at nearer was recognized as a man's head, and called out sorrowfully to the passers-by, "Oh, fellow-men, this comes of going out without an umbrella!"

Leonora laughed again. "My foot does not give me much pain now; I think I could walk."

"You shall not do any such thing," answered Fink. "The rain has not left off, and it is so dark that you can hardly see your own hand."

"Then do me a favour, and look for the men. I am well here, and sit like a roe protected from the rain and from strangers."

"It will not do," said Fink, from his stem.

"I implore of you," cried Leonora, anxiously, stretching her hands out of the plaid. "Leave me alone now."

Fink turned round, seized her hand, and pressed it to his lips; then hastened silently in the direction which the countrymen had taken.

Leonora continued sitting alone under the fir-branches. The rain still poured down; it fell clattering on the tops of the trees, and streamed from the branches down to the ground; the thunder rolled above, the storm came nearer; from time to time a dazzling light flashed through the darkness; then Leonora saw the illuminated stems standing before her in long rows, like the golden pillars of an endless building, and above a black roof, lighted up with bright flames. The forest appeared like an enchanted castle rising out of the earth, and vanishing again in an instant. Mysterious voices sounded through the rain, as are wont to be heard at night in the woods. Over head there was a regular knocking against the stem, as if some bad wood-spirit was knocking at her cottage. Leonora shrank within herself, and then asked herself if it might not be a woodpecker or a bough. From a distance sounded the hoarse cry of a crow, into whose nest the water had penetrated and disturbed its first sleep. By her side she heard a fearful laugh—"Hoo-hoo-hoo-hoo!" and Leonora shuddered again: was it a roguish goblin of the forest, or was it only a little owl? Nature spoke with a hundred melancholy voices: Leonora now felt delight in the wild charm of this solitude—now terror. And in the midst of it all, other thoughts passed through her mind—how foolishly she had acted, to steal away from the house on an expedition which might lead to such an adventure; how they would search for her in the castle; and, above all, what would he think of her who had left her at her own request? She pushed the plaid from her ear and listened: there was no sound of human voices; nothing was heard but the fall of the rain and the sighing of the wood. But near her there was a rustling on the ground—first soft, and then louder; the rain-water collected together and flowed in small channels, murmuring whenever it ran against a large bush, or a root, or a fern-stem; at her back the leaves were rustling, and something approached with quick leaps. Frightened, she pressed her head against the stem: something sat down by her, a living creature touched the plaid she had round her. Cautiously she slid her hand under the plaid towards her neighbour, and felt the soft skin of a hare, that, frightened from its form by the running water, came like herself for shelter under the trees. She held her breath lest she should scare her little companion from her hut, and for a time the two sat there together, the hare having nestled itself into the plaid.

Single shots sounded in the distance through the rain and thunder. Leonora shuddered, and the hare dashed with a bound into the darkness: there, men were fighting with one another; there, blood was flowing on the dark earth. A cry was heard, which sounded in the distance ferocious and threatening; then all was still. "Had he been in danger?" she asked herself; but she felt no anxiety, and shook her head. Wherever he was, there was no danger for him—a falling bough would ward off the rifle that was aimed at him; the knife that was drawn against him would break to pieces like a splint, before it touched him; the man who stood against him would stumble and fall, ere he could touch his proud head. He was proof against all danger, as he was against every fear; he knew no anxieties and no sorrows; and, ah! he did not feel like other men. Boldly he raised his head, and his eye was clear when all others looked depressed; no difficulties frightened him, no hindrances barred his way; with a light movement of his foot he pushed aside what crushed others

Such was he. And this man had now seen her—weak, rash, and helpless; through her own fault, he had gained the right to treat her with flighty familiarity. She trembled lest he should use this right, by a look, an overbearing smile, or a quick word. Thus, for a whole hour, her heart throbbed, and her thoughts flew about.

The storm passed over. Instead of the rushing torrent, a soft, lasting rain fell from the clouds, the little gutter bubbled more gently, and the owls screamed more frequently; instead of the black darkness and flashing light, there was a faint grey over the sky and over the forest. Only the pillars of the nearest trees emerged like dusky shadows from the monotonous darkness of the background. A feeling of solitude fell upon Leonora. Then, again, the distant sound of voices struck upon her ear, calls and answers became louder, and she distinguished the bailiff's voice crying out, "They have passed over the moor, go there, men of Neudorf."

The steps of the speakers came nearer, the form of a man was moving close by the fir-trees. Karl put his hand to his mouth, and halloed loud into the wood, "Hallo, Fraulein Leonora!"

"I am here," cried a low voice at his feet.

Surprised, Karl stepped back, and called out joyfully, "Found!" The country-people surrounded Leonora's fir-hut with loud cries. "Our Fraulein is here!" exclaimed a lad of Neudorf, and hurraed for joy, as if he were at a wedding.

Leonora arose: her foot was still painful, but she leant on Karl's arm, and endeavoured bravely to go on.

"Only to the moor," he said, "there the trees are not so close."

Meanwhile, the young men broke some poles, and laying fir-branches across, Leonora, in spite of her remonstrances, was obliged by her devoted servants to sit on the rude litter, while one of them ran in advance to the constable's farm, to meet her with her horse.

"Have you caught the thieves?" asked Leonora of the bailiff, who was walking by her.

"Two," he answered: "the calf was killed: we have brought the hide and part of the flesh: the geese were hanging on a bough, with their necks twisted; but the villains had already shared the money, and we found but little on the two."

"They are Tarow people," said the constable, gloomily, "the worst fellows in the village. I wish they were from some other place, for they are revengeful people that live there."

"I heard some shots," cried Leonora; "has any misfortune happened?"

"Not to us, certainly," answered Karl; "they had, in their imprudence, lighted a fire behind there, not far from the skirt of the wood, where we made a chain on horseback. The blaze was to be seen even through the rain, so they betrayed themselves. We dismounted from our horses, crept up, and fell upon them: they fired their muskets, and ran into the thicket. It was long before the infantry reached us in the wood, and without the shots and the noise they never would have found us. Herr von Fink pointed out the place where we should find you: he escorts the prisoners along the road; they will be taken to the castle, and to-morrow we shall convey them to German ground."

"But how could Herr von Fink leave you alone in the wood?" said the honest constable, shaking his head; "that was a desperate trick."

"I begged him not to remain," answered Leonora, casting her eyes down, in spite of the darkness.

Halfway to the village Leonora's pony met the procession. In Neudorf Karl received the baron's horse from the - - - escorted the

young lady back to the castle. It was late at night when they arrived ; Leonora's long absence had caused her mother great anguish, and put her father into his worst temper. The daughter quickly escaped from the questions with which she was overwhelmed, and hastened to her room. An hour later, Fink came with the forester from Kunau, and brought the two prisoners, who, with their hands bound, walked haughtily between the guards, and bore their peacock-feathers as proudly as if they were going to a dance at the tavern.

"You will pay for it," said one of them, in Polish, to the men that accompanied them, and clenched his fettered fist.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

It was still raining : at daybreak the sky had made a pause, but only to renew its moist labours with redoubled strength. The labourers in the meadow had gone to work at an early hour in the morning, but soon came back again : they were now sitting silently in the guard-room of the castle, drying their wet clothes by the stove.

The baron was lying in his leather chair in the back room. He made old John read the papers aloud to him, which had again, on the preceding day, made their appearance at the castle. The monotonous voice of the servant announced only unwelcome news : the drops of rain pattered on the gutters, the storm beat howling on the corner of the house, accompanying the reading with discords.

Anthony was busy at his writing-table : before him lay a letter from Justizrath Horn, who stated that the day for the judicial sale of the family estate had been fixed for the middle of the next winter, and that immediately after this announcement, several mortgages had passed from one hand into another, and he feared that they had been bought by some one speculator, who disguised himself under different names. Anthony was reflecting in sorrowful mood on the critical position of the baron.

In the next room Fink was sitting with the ladies ; the baroness was lying on the sofa, covered with a shawl of Leonora's : she looked silently before her, and it was only when her daughter went up to her with some tender question, that she nodded and smiled, and spoke cheerfully. Leonora was at the window, occupied with some light work, and listening with delight to the jokes with which Fink brightened the sorrowful grey of the room. In spite of the rain, he was in one of his most wanton humours. From time to time Leonora's laugh sounded through the oak-door to Anthony's ear ; then he forgot the sale of estates and mortgages, and glanced with clouded looks at the door, and felt, not without bitterness, that a new struggle was coming on for him and the family.

Out of doors the rain was pouring, and the air was still stormy ; loudly the wind roared his lamentations from the wood to the castle ; the boughs of the fir-trees creaked, and the tufts at their tops waved restlessly towards the mansion. On the pear-trees and along the corn-fields the leaves waved, and the white blossoms trembled confusedly. Furiously the storm flung the blossoms to the ground, fastened them with its rain-drops to the earth, and howled out, "Down with your laughing brightness ; whatever belongs to the castle shall wear grey mourning colours to-day." From the trees the wild storm raged against the walls of the castle ; it shook the flagstaff on the tower, it dashed the water from the clouds,



obliquely against the windows, darted groaning into the chimney, and thundered at the doors; through every aperture it cried out, "Guard your house!" Thus it went on for hours, but those within it did not understand its language; no more did any one notice the rider who forced his weary horse with rapid strides through the village to the castle. At last the knocker beat on the gate of the court; the strokes sounded impatient, and voices were heard in the yard and on the stairs. Anthony opened the door, and an armed man, dripping with water, and covered with mud from the road, entered the room.

"Is it you?" exclaimed Anthony, astonished.

"They are coming," reported Karl, looking cautiously round him; "prepare yourself; this time it is against us."

"The enemy? how strong is the band?"

"It is no band that I have seen," answered Karl, seriously; "it is an army—a thousand scythemen, and full a hundred horsemen. They are marching to join the main body: I am told they have orders to take with them all the Polish men, and to disarm the German communities."

Anthony opened the door of the next room, and begged Fink to come to him.

"Ah!" cried Fink, entering and casting a look at Karl; "he who brings half the highroad with him into a room brings no good news. From what side are the enemy coming, sergeant?"

"They are advancing from the birchwood of Neudorf in great numbers; the people in our village are assembled in the inn, drinking brandy and quarrelling."

"No alarm-fire has been lighted, no report has come from the nearest villages," cried out Anthony from the window. "Have the Germans in Neudorf and Kunau been sleeping?"

"They have been surprised themselves," continued the messenger of bad news; "their posts saw the enemy yesterday evening; they were marching half-a-mile from Neudorf, on the high road to Rosmin. When they had passed the spot where the road to Neudorf turns off from the high road, the villagers were in great spirits; they then followed the scythemen for some distance, until the last troop were out of sight. But in the night the hands turned back, fell on the village this morning, and have made sad havoc; the constable is lying on the straw, covered with wounds, a lost man, and the alarm-house, down there over the wood, is on fire; you would see the smoke if this heavy rain did not prevent you. Now the enemy have divided in search of the German villages; one division is marching against Kunau, another against our new farm, and the largest division is coming here."

"How much time have we still to receive the gentlemen?" asked Fink.

"With this weather it will require an hour for the foot-people to get here."

"Is the forester warned?" inquired Anthony. "And do they know at the new farm?"

"There was not time to call upon them; the new farm lies further from Neudorf than the castle: I might have arrived here too late. I have lighted our fire-alarm, but this weather no one sees either fire or smoke, and every signal is useless."

"If they have not been on the look-out for themselves, we can do nothing more for them."

"The forester is a sly fox," said Karl; "nobody will catch him. But the bailiff at the new farm and his young wife—Heaven have mercy on them!"

"Save our people!" cried out an imploring voice at Fink's side. Leonora was standing in the room, pale, and with folded hands.

Anthony hastened to the door through which Leonora had entered, noiselessly. "The baroness!" he exclaimed, anxiously.

"She has not heard of it," answered Leonora, hurriedly; "send to the new farm—help our people!"

Fink seized his cap. "Take my horse out," he said to Karl.

"You must not leave us now," said Anthony, stopping him; "I will take your horse."

"With your leave, Herr Wohlfart," interposed Karl; "if I may ride Herr von Fink's horse, I shall be able to do the work."

"Do as you like," said Fink. "Send the forester here, and all the men you can get together; send the women, horses, and sheep as far as you can into the depth of the forest; the bailiff must retire with the cattle deep into the thicket, and watch the castle from the old firs by the sand-pit. As for yourself, you must remain on my horse, which I must unfortunately leave to your mercy for some days. Ride to Rosmin, and look out for the nearest detachment of our troops; beg in our name for help—if possible, for cavalry."

"Our red-caps are said to be an hour's walk beyond Rosmin," said Karl, going out; "the smith told me this as I rode past him."

"Bring here whatever tributary you can get hold of; whilst you saddle the horse I will write a line to the commander."

Karl wheeled round with a military salute, and sprang down-stairs, Anthony with them. Whilst Karl buckled on the girths, Anthony said to him, hastily, "Call the farm people as you ride by; I will go over there immediately. Poor lad, you have scarcely had any breakfast to-day, and have little prospect of getting any for some hours. He rushed back into the house, fetched a bottle of rum, some bread, and the remains of a ham, put the provisions into a bag, and handed them with a letter to the rider, who was on the point of leaving the yard.

"Thank you," said Karl, seizing Anthony's hand, "you think of every one, but now I have one request to make to you—think also of yourself, Herr Wohlfart; this Polish concern, both here and without, is not worth hazarding your life for; there are some of our people at home who would be very sorry if anything was to happen to you."

Anthony shook the hand of his faithful friend heartily. "Farewell, I will do my duty. Do not forget to send the forester to us, and, above all, save the bailiff's wife. Bring the soldiers here by the wood path."

"Don't be uneasy," said Karl, gaily, "the thorough-bred brown shall learn to-day what a hussar lad is up to." Saying this, he waved his cap, and disappeared at full gallop behind the building of the farm yard.

Anthony bolted the door, then hurried into the guard-room, and rang the alarm-bell: he ordered the foreman to assemble the workpeople, to keep the back-door, and to let no one enter without asking leave—not even the fugitives. Eat plenty, and drink in moderation, we shall have hard work to-day. Meanwhile Fink was standing in his room, at the table, loading the guns. Leonora reached him from the wall what he wanted: she was pale, but her eyes glowed with excitement, which did not escape Anthony when he entered: "Let us take care of these serious toys," he entreated, going up to her.

"It is the house of my parents that you are defending," said Leonora; "my father is not in a state to lead you; you are not to put your lives in danger without my being present."

"Pardon me," answered Anthony, "your first duty is to prepare the baroness, and not to leave her during the approaching trying time."

"My mother, my poor mother!" cried Leonora, clasping her hands; she laid the powder-horn down, and hastened into the next room.

"I have desired the people to dine," said Anthony to Fink. "Now you must take the command."

"Good," answered Fink. "Here is your weapon; this double-barrelled rifle is light; one barrel is loaded with ball, the other with deer-shot; the bag with the balls is under your bed."

"Do you think of standing a siege?" asked Anthony.

"Either we must not make any resistance, and surrender ourselves to the friendly discretion of the hands that are coming, or we must try to hold out to the last ball. We have prepared for the latter. Perhaps surrender would be the wisest, but I acknowledge it is not to my taste. However, as there is a master of the house in existence, we may as well go and speak to the baron."

Anthony hastened through the corridor to the other wing; already from a distance he heard chairs being violently pushed about in the baron's room. After an angry "Come in," he entered the room. The baron was standing bolt upright in the middle, and rushed at him: "I hear that something is going on, and look upon it as an unpardonable want of consideration that I am not informed of anything."

"Pardon, my lord baron," answered Anthony, "it is only a few minutes ago the intelligence arrived that a hostile troop of scythemen and horse are marching against your estate. We have, with all speed, despatched a messenger to the nearest military station, then we barred the door, and are now awaiting your orders."

"Send Herr von Fink here," answered the baron, imperiously.

"He is at this moment in the guard-room."

"I beg he will take the trouble of coming to me directly," roared out the baron, in a fury; "I cannot talk with you on military measures. Fink is a nobleman, and half a soldier, I will give him the necessary instructions. What are you waiting for?" he continued, rudely. "Do you young people think you can play with me, because I have the misfortune of being blind? He who eats my bread, and takes my money, should at least respect my orders."

"Father," cried out Leonora, clasping her hands, and giving a beseeching look to Anthony.

"You are right, my lord baron; I beg your pardon for having forgotten, in my confusion, my first duty. I will send Herr von Fink in a moment." He hurried out of the room, and informed Fink, in the entrance-hall, of the irritable state of the baron's temper.

"He is a fool," said Fink.

"Pray go up directly," answered Anthony; "the ladies also are suffering from his temper." Anthony then threw a labourer's jacket over his shoulders, and ran through the back door, in the rain, into the farm-yard.

In the yard he found wild confusion. German families from the neighbouring villages had fled to the alarm-house, and were sitting there with their children, and some of their goods. Full twenty persons were encamped on the barn floor—men, women, and children; the women were lamenting, the children crying, and the men looking gloomily on the ground: many of them belonged to the village militia, and most of them were armed with muskets. In the yard the small carts of the fugitives were standing, ploughboys, horses, and cows, were running about in confusion. Anthony called to the engineer to assist him in making the

necessary arrangements. He confided the farm-horses and the cattle to the most trustworthy ploughman and the head dairymaid; he took the man, who was a resolute fellow, apart, and discussed with him if they could find a place in the thicket, not far from the sand-pit, where they might hope for concealment for the men and animals, and some shelter against the weather. Then he ordered the maid to leave a cow behind, opened the back gate himself for the herd to go through, and watched the people, who were supplied with victuals, marching towards the forest.

"But what are we to do with the horses of the baron and of the strangers?" asked the engineer, hastily.

"We must contrive to get them and some carriages into the castle. Who knows that we may not be obliged to fly, when it comes to the worst?"

Anthony had some sacks of potatoes, flour, and oats, and as many bundles of hay as there was room for, quickly loaded on Karl's newly-painted carts. He made the men put a pair of horses to the fire-barrels, and filled them with water. It still continued to pour with rain, and in the midst of it, the ploughmen had to throw sacks, boxes, and bundles on to the carts; all were rushing about in confusion, calling out and swearing in German and Polish. When Anthony walked among the fugitives, the screams of the women became louder, the men surrounded him, and began to tell him of their misfortunes, and the children hung to his knees; it was a sad scene. Anthony tried to console them; "Above all, keep quiet; we shall protect you to the best of our power; I hope the military will come to our assistance. In the meanwhile, you shall go to the castle for safety. You have stood by us faithfully in these bad times, so long as we have bread you shall not want."

After a quarter of an hour of hard work, Anthony returned to the castle. The ploughboy took the carts to the back door, followed by the fugitives. More people continued coming, who had escaped from the German villages; the smith of Kunau, too, was standing at the castle-door with a troop of his village neighbours. The whole train was arranged and let in one by one, the horses were taken out, and the carts unloaded. Anthony led the women and children into two rooms on the lower story, which were dark, but more comfortable than the alarm-houses or the wet fields. Placing the horses gave them the greatest trouble; a dozen animals stood thronged together in an open shed, hardly protected from rain or from balls. The water-butts were placed in the middle of the yard, and the potato-carts were placed against the fence, in order to give, in case of need, a stand for the riflemen. Then the men capable of bearing arms were collected together by the smith; besides the meadow labourers and four ploughmen, there were fifteen German villagers, most of them armed. Their steps sounded heavily through the long passage of the castle; they marched into the entrance-hall, and were arranged by the side of the labourers. There the whole armed force of the fortress was collected. Fink, in his hunting-dress, walked up and down in front of his company of labourers. Anthony approached him, and informed him what he had done.

"You bring us men," answered Fink; "that is all right, but a whole clan of women and children besides! The castle is as full as a bee-hive, above sixty mouths, and almost a dozen horses. In spite of your potato-carts, after four-and-twenty hours we shall be obliged to gnaw the stones."

"Could I leave them outside?" asked Anthony, indignantly.

"They would have been as safe in the woods as here," said Fink, shrugging his shoulders.

"It is possible," replied Anthony: "but to turn the people out into

the wood, in the pouring rain, without food, and in the fearful anguish of a hopeless flight, would have been a cruelty which I could not answer for, and do you think we should have got the men without the women and children?"

"We can make use of the men at all events," cried Fink, turning to the new arrivals; "but look after the supply of food."

Fink gave the men arms, and divided the whole force into four divisions, one for the yard, two for the upper and under story, and one as a reserve in the guard-room. Then he employed the smith of Kunau to obtain an accurate report of the enemy. Meanwhile Anthony had hastened down to the ground-floor; there he charged the engineer with the inspection of the provisions, and made the baron's servants carry supplies of wood and water. A sack of potatoes and one of meal were deposited near the hearth, and a large kettle was placed upon the fire; when leaving, he confided to the cook, that a milch cow had been taken into the stall where the horse of Herr von Fink had stood, that the family, at least, might not be deprived of milk. The old Babette's hands were shaking with terror; "Ah, Herr von Wohlfart, what a terrible misfortune," she cried out; "the balls will fly into my kitchen!"

"God forbid!" said Anthony, "the window is too low, you cannot be hit, cook quietly on. The people are dying of hunger, I will send you two of the strange woman to help."

"Who could eat in such danger?" exclaimed the cook.

"We shall all eat," said Anthony, calmly.

"Do you order soup or potato broth?" said Babette, in her despair, waving her ladle about feverishly.

"Both, good mother."

The cook stopped him; "But, Herr Wohlfart, I want eggs for the family; there is not an egg in the whole house. Mercy upon me, that such a misfortune should have happened just to-day. What will the baron say if he has not his beat-up egg to-night?"

"To the devil with your eggs," cried Anthony, impatiently, "they will not be so particular to-night."

When he returned, Fink called to him, "The posts are set; we can now quietly await their arrival. I shall go to the tower and take some rifles with me; if anything happens I am to be found there."

The hall was empty, and everything was quiet again in the house, the sentries stood silently staring towards the edge of the wood; in the guard-room the men were sitting, talking in a subdued tone, only in the rooms where the children were, downstairs, the noise did not cease, and a continual intercourse was carried on between these rooms and the kitchen. Anthony walked up and down, in a state of unusual suspense, from the house into the yard, and again to his own room, where he tied up the baron's papers, and again through the passages and rooms, where the armed men were placed. In this manner, one quarter of an hour after another passed away: at last Leonora came from her mother's room, and exclaimed, "This uncertainty is intolerable!"

"There is no news from the new farm," answered Anthony, gloomily; "but the rain has ceased, and whatever takes place to-day, will at least be in the sunshine; there, the clouds are breaking, and the blue sky is making its appearance. How is the baroness?"

"She is composed," said Leonora, "prepared for everything."

Both walked to and fro silently in the entrance-hall; at length, Leonora stopped in front of Anthony, and exclaimed, with an expression

of deep feeling, "Wohlfart, it is terrible to think that you have got into this situation for our sake."

"Is this situation so terrible?" asked Anthony, with a sad smile.

"Perhaps not, with your feelings," said Leonora; "but you sacrifice more for us than we deserve—you would be happier in another position." She walked to the window and wept bitterly. Anthony went up to her, to try and calm her; "if you mean the hasty words of your father, just now, there is no reason to pity me, you know what we have already said upon this point."

"It is not that alone," cried Leonora, still weeping.

Anthony knew that it was not that alone, he felt that there was a confession in those words. "Whatever it may be," he said cheerfully, "will you not allow me the pleasure of encountering an adventure? Certainly, I am an awkward soldier, but it appears as if the enemy would not give me much opportunity of doing them any mischief."

"No one thanks you for what you endure for us, no one," exclaimed Leonora again.

"No one?" asked Anthony, "have I not a friend here, who is too much inclined to overrate what little I can do? Leonora, you have permitted me to be more intimate with you than under common circumstances would be possible. Do you count it for nothing that I have gained some of the rights of a brother towards you?"

Leonora seized his hand and pressed it; "I, too, have been different to what I ought to have been. I am very unhappy," she cried out passionately, "I cannot confide to any one what is passing in my heart, no to my mother, nor to you; I have lost all self-confidence and all composure." She pressed her handkerchief to her eyes.

"Leonora," cried her father, impatiently, from his room.

"This is no time for explanations," she said, more calmly; "when we have got over this day, I will endeavour to be stronger than now. Help me to be so, Wohlfart."

Leonora hastened to the baron's room, and Anthony remained lost in sorrowful thought. Meanwhile, the bright sunlight fell on the castle-yard, the men left the guard-room, and placed themselves at the door, the women also pressed out of the dark rooms, and could, with difficulty, be kept back. After the first alarm had passed, the men took heart, and made all kinds of suggestions. "Who knows that they may not have forgotten the castle," said one; "Or whether they have the courage to attack us," said another. And a clever tailor demonstrated, by ingeniously patching together the different reports, that every Polish coat had marched past Rosmin. But eagerly as every one expressed his conviction that the danger was past, yet they listened anxiously to the tread of the sentries before the house, and looked again and again up to the tower, to see if there was no signal from thence. Anthony also felt the suspense intolerable, and, at length, went up himself to the tower. On the platform he found all the authorities of the castle assembled; the blind baron was sitting on a chair, the tall figure of Leonora was leaning behind him, she held a parasol before her father's eyes; four stout riflemen were sitting in the broad loop-holes, on the top of the wall sat Fink, dangling his legs, and blowing blue clouds from a cigar.

"Nothing," answered Fink, "but a drunken band of our villagers, who are marching off there, on their way to Tarow." He pointed to a dark mass just disappearing in the forest. "It is better that we should be rid of that mob, they are afraid of the grey jackets, and think it more advisable to plunder elsewhere. Every hour of delay is a gain to us. We

have just made out that, under the most favourable circumstances, we cannot expect help before to-morrow at noon. Those gentlemen behind the wood are not sufficiently interesting to make a visit from them, of four-and-twenty hours, agreeable. An exquisite point of view here, Herr von Rothsattel, there is nothing to be seen, but a little fir-wood, your fields, and sand. A glorious height, however, for defence. Sentimental hearts, have been complaining that it is all so bare round the castle, no tree nor bush to be seen. But I think that splendid. With the exception of the first barn of the farm, which may be about three hundred paces in a straight line from this point, there is no shelter for a hostile traillieur larger than a mole-hill; as far as a rifle ranges, from here, we command the whole plain. The only thing in the way is that shrubbery; I believe it has been planted by Fraulein Leonora."

"I plead guilty," said Leonora.

"Well," answered Fink, carelessly, "then you must pay the cost of the cure if we are hit. Half-a-dozen rifles may find a shelter there."

"It is Leonora's favourite spot," said the baron; "she has a turf seat there, and it is the only place where she can sit in the open air."

"Ah," said Fink, "that is another matter." He looked round for Leonora—she had vanished from her father's side. Immediately afterwards the gate of the yard opened, and Leonora, followed by several workmen, hastened to the shrubbery. Fink called out, in amazement, "What are you going to do, Fraulein?" Leonora made an energetic movement, signifying cutting down. She, with her own hands, seized a young fir-tree, and using all her strength, pulled it out of the ground; the men followed her example, and in the course of a few minutes the whole of the young plantation was rooted up. Then Leonora, in her zeal, took the hatchet herself, and began aiming blows at the turf seat to destroy it.

Anthony had planted the trees with the young lady; both had enjoyed the good effect produced by the shrubbery. Leonora had been there daily, and each of the young stems was a personal friend. Now Anthony looked silently at the destruction, and at last could not forbear saying, "The small shrubbery could have done little harm; you have occasioned a useless destruction."

"No," answered Fink, "Fraulein Leonora has acted like the prudent commander of a fortress. The first determination of such a person is to level the pleasure-grounds about their walls, and this plantation will easily be raised again in the spring. Carry the wood further off to the farm," he shouted to the men. "pull down the wooden enclosure of the well, take the planks into the yard, and cover the opening."

When Leonora returned again behind her father's chair, he nodded to her as an older comrade would to a younger, took his telescope, and examined again the outskirts of the forest.

In this way they remained for full an hour; no one was in a mood to talk, and Fink's occasional jokes fell on sterile ground. Anthony went down-stairs to keep the people in order; but he soon was attracted again to the battlement, and turned his eyes, like the others, on the path to the wood. At length Fink, throwing away his cigar after a long silence, said, "Evening is coming on; we show our guests too much honour in awaiting them here with such quiet devotion. When the news of this advance reached us, Wohlfart and I could not be spared from the house, and as Karl was away breaking my poor horse's legs, we had nobody we could send out as a patrol to reconnoitre. Now we are punished for this sin of omission: we are shut up in our den, and the men are getting

tired before the enemy comes. It is necessary that one of us should, with a few men, get on horseback and obtain further news about the enemy. This calm is unnatural; no living creature is to be seen in the whole of the open fields, or on the roads, and it appears to me strange that for the last two hours no fugitives have come from the wood; the cloud of smoke also from Neudorf has disappeared."

Anthony silently prepared to leave the tower.

"Go, my son," said Fink, "take the surest men with you, see how things are going on in the village, and be careful about the fir-wood. Stop a moment, I will once more examine the forest with my glass." He looked for a long time, observed every tree, and at last put the glass down. "There is nothing to be seen," he said, thoughtfully; "if the gentlemen whom we expect have anything else but clumsy scythes, we must assume that they are preparing some devilish work. But all is uncertain—be careful of the wood."

Anthony left the tower, called the engineer and two ploughmen, had the baron's horse and three of the swiftest of the farm-horses untied, and made the smith open the door. The riders went first to the farm-yard—all was quiet and peaceful there. The hens which Karl had purchased some weeks before were scratching on the dunghill, his pigeons were cooing on the thatched roof, a small dog, which had followed the smith from Kunauf, had established itself as watchman to the desolate yard, and barked suspiciously at the riders. In close rank they trotted to the inn in the village; the top room was empty. Anthony called to the landlord. After a while the man came, very pale, to the door, and clasped his hands when he saw Anthony. "Gracious heavens, Herr Wohlfart, are you still here? I had thought that you had long since fled with the family to Rosmin, or to where our soldiers are. Good God! what a misfortune! Bratzky has been in this very room, trying to persuade the people to rise against the family in the castle, and against the Germans; but he could not get them to march against the castle. So the greatest part of the villagers are gone to the Poles at Tarow, those who remain behind have hid themselves; I am busy burying as quickly as possible all I can."

"Where are the enemy now?" asked Anthony.

"I do not know," exclaimed the landlord; "but I know that it is a great army, with lancers in uniform."

"Is the forest safe towards Neudorf?"

"How can it be safe? within the last few hours no one has come from Neudorf; if the road was free, half the village would be here, in my inn, or with you at the castle."

"You are right. Shall you await the bands here?" asked Anthony, who was preparing to set off; "you would be safer in the castle."

"Who knows?" said the landlord. "I cannot go now; if I do, my whole property would be destroyed."

"But your women?" asked Anthony, stopping his horse.

"I must have people to help me," said the landlord, in a despairing tone. "Though they are young they must go through it. There is Rebecca, my sister's child, who comes from a family accustomed to traffic. She knows how to deal with the peasants, and to get money from them, even when they are drunk. Rebecca," he called out to her, "Herr Wohlfart inquires whether you will go to the castle, to be safe from the wild men?" Rebecca's plump face, surrounded by red hair, dived out from the cellar.

"What good is the castle to me, uncle?" she cried out, resolutely.



"What do you call wild men? Our peasants all about are wild men. If I can get on with them, I can with the others. My aunt has lost her head, there must be one person at least who knows how to manage the guests. I thank you, worthy sir, I have no fears; the noblemen who are with the troops will not suffer me to be insulted."

"Forward, men," called out Anthony. They trotted on through the village—every door was closed; only here and there a woman's head was seen looking out of the little windows after the riders. They came to the broad cart-road in the vicinity of the wood; at the entrance to the wood one of the ploughmen said to Anthony, "There are young trees to the left; a hundred men might easily lie in ambush there, and we should not see them; they would make away with us, or cut off our retreat to the castle."

"You are right," said Anthony; "we will ride across the field to the back of the drift; there the trees stand singly, and we can go in, and out again, from thence we will examine the young wood." They turned from the road, crossed the fallow, and their horses trod within range of the thicket; "Now get down from your horses," said Anthony, to the ploughmen. Anthony and the ploughmen gave the reins of their bridles to the engineer, took their muskets in their hands, and stept cautiously into the underwood; "Fire into it, and then back to your horses as quick as you can run." The shots rattled among the young firs, and in a few seconds were answered by an irregular fire from several muskets, which was followed by loud cries. The balls whistled over Anthony's head, but the distance was not great, and at full speed the men reached their horses unhurt. "Gallop, we know enough; they were not cunning enough to remain quiet." The little troop clattered speedily along the high road to the castle; the shouts of their pursuers were heard behind them, the riders reached the castle breathless, and Anthony found all in the yard had taken the alarm. Fink met him at the entrance.

"You were right," cried out Anthony, to him, "they were lying in ambush, they have been there for some hours; perhaps their object was to catch you, or both of us on our way to Neudorf, then they would have got the castle into their hands without a struggle."

"How many can there be?" asked Fink.

"You saw that we had no time to count them," answered Anthony. "No doubt one troop is in advance, and the great body of them lie further back in the wood."

"We have disturbed them," rejoined Fink; "now we may expect their visit. It is better for our men that it should be before sunset, than at night."

"They are coming," called out Leonora, from the tower.

The friends hastened to the platform. When Anthony looked over the battlement of the tower, the sun was going down. The sky glowed with a dazzling gold colour, and changed the green of the woods to a rich bronze. A troop of horsemen, about half a squadron, were trotting in regular line towards the village; more than a hundred men on foot followed, the first half armed with muskets, the others with scythes. The beautiful evening light fell upon the figures on the tower; a beetle was humming merrily about Anthony's ear—and high in the air sounded the evening song of the lark. Meanwhile the danger was approaching below. Nearer and nearer, it crept along the winding road—a dark long mass, noiseless, only perceptible to the eye. The beetle continued to buzz in the ear, and the lark to sing her joyful song. At length the column disappeared behind the first cottages of the village. There was a moment

of breathless silence, every one had their eyes fixed on the spot, where the enemy would again become visible; Leonora stood by Anthony, in her left hand she grasped a rifle, and her right was in a hunting-bag; without knowing that she did it, her hand rattled the balls together. When the horsemen became visible in the middle of the village, Fink touched his cap, and said gravely, "Now to your posts, gentlemen. You, Anthony, have the goodness to lead the baron down." As Anthony was supporting the blind man down the steps, he looked back and pointed to Leonora, who was standing immovable, regarding with fixed looks the advancing enemy. "You, too, Fraulein, I must beg to think of your own safety," continued Fink.

"I am safest here," answered Leonora, perversely, striking her rifle on the stones. "You cannot ask me to lay my head on the sofa, whilst you are going to stake your life."

Fink looked with admiration on the beautiful face, and said; "I have no objection, if you can make up your mind to sit in this chair, you will be as safe as anywhere in the castle."

"I shall be cautious," Leonora answered.

"And you, my boys, hide yourselves behind the wall, take care not to show a shoulder or tip of your cap, and don't fire till I give you a sign with this screamer; you will hear its sound even up here." He took out a broad, strange-looking whistle. "*Au revoir*," he said, looking at Leonora with beaming eyes.

"*Au revoir*," said Leonora, raising her arm and looking at him as he descended, till the door closed after him.

In the entrance-hall Fink found the baron. The poor gentleman had been thrown into a whirl of painful feelings, by the suspense of the long day, and the consciousness that he could be of no use, at a time when he considered it the privilege of his rank to act. In former years he would have encountered every personal danger with perfect calmness; on this occasion it was evident how much his strength was broken, as he could not succeed in keeping his self-control. He grasped convulsively about with his hands, as if seeking for a weapon, and painful groans escaped from the depth of his heart. "My kind host," said Fink, addressing him; "as your indisposition makes it difficult for you to treat with strangers, I beg your permission to do it in your name."

"You have full power," the baron answered, with a hoarse voice; "indeed the state of my eyes is such, that I cannot hope to be of any use. A wretched cripple!" he cried out aloud, and covered his face with his hands. Fink turned away with a shrug, and opened a sliding panel in the oak door, which was intended to lead to the raised entrance not yet finished, and looked out.

"Allow me," said Anthony to the baron, "to lead you to a place where you will not be uselessly exposed to the balls."

"Do not trouble yourself about me," said the baron; "I am of less importance to-day than the poorest labourer who takes up arms for my sake."

"Have you any more commissions for me?" Anthony asked Fink, as he seized his rifle.

"None," answered Fink, smiling; "but, that you are not to forget to take care of yourself, if you come to close quarters. Good luck to you." He stretched out his hand to him. Anthony took it, and then hastened into the court-yard.

"At present the enemy are valuing your farm," said Fink to the baron; "in a few minutes we shall have the gentlemen here. There they

come, horse and foot. They halt at the barn. A troop of riders advance, it is the staff: nice youths among them, and fine horses; they ride out of range round the castle. They are more cautious than I expected, they are looking for an entrance, we shall hear directly a knocking at the back-door."

All remained still. "Extraordinary," said Fink. "I fancy it is the usage of war to summon the garrison to surrender, before an attack; but there come the officers galloping round the castle, and back to their troops. Has Wohlfart put them in such terror, that they have retreated, *ventre à terre*?"

The clattering of the horses' hoofs, and the hollow tramp of the foot people were heard.

"Zounds!" continued Fink, "the whole body are marching to our side of the castle, as if on parade; if they intend to storm it on this side, they must have strange ideas of the siege of a fortress. They are making front against us at the distance of two hundred paces. The infantry are two deep in the centre, with the horsemen on their flanks, quite a Roman array—real Julius Cæsar. See, they have got a drummer. The chap advances, the clatter that you hear is the beating of the drum. Ah! the leader rides in front. He comes on and halts before the door. Civility requires that we should ask this gentleman what he wishes." Fink laid hold of the heavy bolt of the door, and pushed it back, the door flew open. Fink stepped on to the threshold, filling the entrance, and holding his double-barrelled rifle carelessly in his hand. When the rider saw the slender figure standing before him, in common hunting attire, looking so calmly in his face, he pulled up his horse and touched his hat; Fink thanked him with a slight inclination of his head.

"I wish to speak to the proprietor of this property," said the horseman.

"You must content yourself with me; I stand here in his place," answered Fink.

"Then tell him that we come to fulfil an order of the government in his house," cried out the horseman.

"Will your knighthip allow me to ask what government is so thoughtless as to charge you with orders for Baron von Rothsattel? It is reported that views about government are rather disturbed in this country."

"The Polish central committee is your supreme magistrate, as well as mine," replied the rider.

"It is very obliging of you to give any central committee the power over your neck. You must allow us to be of an opposite opinion on this point."

"You see that we have means to compel obedience to the orders of government; and I advise you not to oblige us, by opposition, to have recourse to force."

"I thank you for your counsel, and should be still more obliged to you if, in your zeal, you did not forget that the ground on which you are standing is not a public stable-yard, but private property, and that the horses of strangers can only prance about it with the permission of the proprietor, for which, as far as I know, you have not asked."

"Enough of words, sir," exclaimed the rider, impatiently; "if you are indeed entitled to represent the owner of this estate, I summon you to open the gates of this castle without delay, and to surrender your arms."

"Unhappily," said Fink, "I am in the unpleasant position of being unable to comply with your wishes. I must add a request, that you, together with the gentlemen in torn boots, who are standing down there will leave this place as quickly as possible. My young men are just on

the point of trying to hit the mole-hills underneath your men's feet, and we should be sorry if, in doing so, we should injure the naked toes of your companions." Then, suddenly changing his careless tone, he shouted out, "Go, sir!" with so vehement an expression of anger and contempt, that the rider's horse reared, and the man grasped at his pistol.

During this parley the riders and some of the infantry had approached near enough to catch the words of the conversation.

More than once a barrel was levelled, but was each time struck aside by the single horseman, who pushed his horse before the line of armed men.

At Fink's last words a fierce-looking fellow in an old frieze jacket raised his weapon, a shot sounded, and a ball passed close to Fink's cheek into the boards of the door. At the same instant a suppressed scream was heard from above, a bright flame flashed from the battlement, and the rash fellow was struck to the ground. The officer turned his horse round, the assailants withdrew, and Fink barred the door.

When he turned round, Leonora was standing on the first landing of the stairs, with the discharged rifle in her hand, her large eyes fixed anxiously on Fink.

"Are you wounded?" she asked, eagerly.

"Not at all, my faithful comrade," answered Fink.

Leonora flung the rifle from her, and sank down at her father's feet, hiding her face on his knee. The father bent over her, and held her head between his hands; and the nervous excitement of the last few hours brought on him a fit of convulsive sobbing. The daughter clasped passionately the trembling form of her father, speechless, in her arms. Thus they held each other embraced, the one a broken life, the other a life, the fire of which was bursting into flame.

Fink looked out of the window; the enemy had retreated, and the leaders had assembled out of range, as if to consult.

He approached Leonora, and laying his hand on her arm, said, "I thank you, Fraulein, for having so promptly punished that wretch. Now, I beg you to leave this place with your father. We shall be able to do better, if anxiety about you does not withdraw our attention from the enemy."

Leonora shrank from his touch, and a burning crimson covered her cheeks and her forehead.

"We are going," she said, with her eyes cast down; "come, my father." She led the baron, who went with her passively up the stairs, to her mother's room. There she struggled heroically for self-command, sat down by the bedside of the invalid, and did not appear any more that evening in Fink's vicinity.

"Now that we have it to ourselves," Fink called out to the sentries, "now, short distance and quiet aim. If they storm this heap of stones, they will get nothing but bloody heads."

He stood with his companions, looking with watchful eyes on the ranks of his opponents. They were very active; several divisions marched to the village; horsemen were riding up and down the road—there was some scheme on foot; at last, one of the troops dragged some strong boards and a row of empty waggons to the spot. The upper parts of the carts were taken off, and the lower frames were drawn up, side by side, the poles from the castle, and the hind-wheels towards it; then planks were nailed one over the other from the bottom, and made a screen, which was fastened with slanting poles to the hind part of the waggon, and rose several feet above the frame-work, giving tolerable shelter to five or six men.

"Beg *Herr Wachtmeister* to come here," Fink called to one of the riflemen.

"Have there not been some shots fired here?" asked Anthony on entering the hall; "is any one wounded?"

"This thick door, and one of the rabble out there," answered Fink; "they answered the enemy's first shot from the tower without orders."

"There is no enemy to be seen from the court-yard. Before the troop of riders came to the gate one ventured close to the planks, and tried to peep, but when I showed my face over the fence, he dashed away in a fright."

"Look here," said Fink, "they are having some family amusement, making little barricades. As long as the light allows us to see them, the danger will not be great; but at night they will come a little too near with their moving sheds."

"The sky remains clear," said Anthony; "we shall have a bright star-light night."

"If I only knew," said Fink, "why they are mad enough to attack just the strongest side of our fortress. It must be that your peaceable face has worked upon them, like the head of a Gorgon. You shall henceforth be employed, in all Sclavonian wars, as a scarecrow."

It was dark when the hammering at the carts ceased. Words of command were heard. The leaders called individuals by name to the poles. Six movable roofs were driven with great speed to about thirty paces from the front of the castle.

"Now it is in earnest," cried Fink. "Stay here and guard the lower story." Fink rushed up stairs; the long suite of rooms were open. One could see from one end of the house to the other.

"Take care of your heads," he exclaimed to the sentries.

Immediately after an irregular volley was fired against the windows of the upper story. The leaden hail rattled through the panes, the splinters flew jingling on the floor.

Fink seized his whistle: a shrill sound echoed in long vibrations through the whole house: from the top of the tower and from both stories, there was an answering volley from the besieged. And now from both sides the crackling shots succeeded each other irregularly.

The besiegers had the advantage, they had better shelter, and the darkness in the rooms was greater than in the open air.

In the short pauses Fink's loud voice was heard, "Be cool, my men; shelter yourselves!" He was everywhere; his light step, the clear sound of his voice, and sometimes a wild jest encouraged the hearts of the defenders of the house. It filled also Leonora's soul with delight and awe; she scarcely felt the danger of her position; and the convulsive movements of her father, and the gentle moans of her mother, did not make her despair, for the words of the loved one sounded like an assurance of safety in her ear.

The fight before the wall of the castle lasted about an hour. Black lay the gigantic building in the faint light of the stars; no light, no figure was to be seen from outside, only the flashes of fire which now and then darted down from the corner of the windows, announced to those without that there was a deadly life in the castle.

Walking through the suite of rooms, you could here and there perceive a dark figure in the shadow of a pillar, or perhaps you might see the eye flashing with suspense, and the head bending forward, to spy out a weak side of the enemy. Probably none of the men who were now engaged in warlike service, were accustomed to bloody work; they were gathered from the plough and the workshop, and from every kind of peaceful occu-

pation: and anxious suspense and feverish expectation had been visible the whole day on the countenances of even the boldest.

Anthony found, with gloomy satisfaction, how calm he was himself, and how spirited the men were. They were busy, they were at work; even in the deadly work of destruction that energy might be discerned, which every arduous undertaking calls forth in men. After the first shots, the men on the front side loaded as calmly as if they were doing their usual daily work. The face of the ploughman was not more anxious than when he watched the furrow between his oxen; and the skilful tailor took his barrel and the butt end of his musket, with as much indifference as he did the handle of his goose. The guard in the court alone was uneasy, not from fear, but because they were discontented with their own inactivity. From time to time a daring fellow endeavoured to steal into the house behind Anthony's back, in order to fire a shot from the front; and Anthony was obliged to place the engineer at the door, in order to prevent these courageous attempts.

"Only once, Herr Wohlfart, let me shoot at those fellows," begged a young lad of Neudorf, imploringly.

"Wait," answered Anthony, loading; "you will have your turn. In an hour you will relieve those in front."

Meanwhile the stars rose higher and higher, the shots on both sides became less frequent, a weariness seemed to come over both sides.

"Our men are freshest," said Anthony to his friend; "those in the court can hardly be restrained."

"The whole is only blind shooting," answered Fink; they try to take a steady aim; but it is almost an accident if a bullet does any mischief. Except some slight wounds, no damage has happened to us; and I believe those below have not paid much dearer for the sport."

They heard the rolling of wheels. "Hark! they are withdrawing their war carts." The firing ceased, and along the whole line, the dark masses disappeared into the night. "Relieve the guard," continued Fink, "and if you have anything, give them something to drink, for they have behaved like brave men. Then we will quietly await the continuation of the work."

Anthony had some refreshments quickly distributed among the men, and walked over the whole house, relieving the guards and examining the place, from the loft down to the cellar. From the rooms of the women in the lower floor, he heard even at a distance, a doleful chaos of voices. When he entered, he found the bare walls scantily lighted by a small kitchen lamp, the floor was covered with straw, and on the litter the women and children were sitting, and lying in small divisions by the side of their goods. The women expressed their terror by every sort of passionate gesture; some kept wringing their hands incessantly, and calling on heaven for help, without their fears being in the least allayed; others looked down despairingly, quite stunned by the terrors of the night. The children made the most agreeable impression, by howling with all their might, caring for nothing else. In the midst of all this misery, three little children leant with their heads against some beds, and slept with their little fists clenched, as quietly as if they were in their bedsteads at home, and a young woman was sitting in a corner rocking her slumbering infant in her arms, and appearing to forget everything else. At length, still looking at her child, she went up to Anthony, and asked how her husband was.

"In the meanwhile, the enemy outside had lighted great fires; part of the armed men were sitting by the flames, and they were seen carry-

ing pots to the fire and cooking their supper. In the village also there was much noise, shouts and words of command were heard, and from the height they saw lights everywhere, and people running rapidly to and fro along the village street. "That does not look like rest," said Anthony. At that moment there was a loud knocking at the back door; the friends looked at each other, and rushed to the court. "Rothsattel and partridges," muttered a voice, improvising a watch-word. "The forester!" exclaimed Anthony. They removed the barricade, and let the old man in. "Close it again," said the forester, "they are on my track. Good night to you all, I come to inquire if I can be of any use. "Quickly into the house!" exclaimed Anthony, "there you may report to us."

"The wood is as quiet as a church," said the forester. "The cattle are in the forest meadow that lies by the alder trees, and the shepherd is there with his animals. The bailiff is keeping guard. In the darkness I stole into the village as a spy, and come to warn you. As shooting will not succeed, the rogues mean to try fire. They have collected the tar and cart-grease of the whole village, and the pine-splints of the women, out of the stoves, and wherever they found an oil-lamp, they poured it over the faggots."

"They mean, I suppose, to burn the yard gate," said Fink.

The forester made a face. "It is not the yard door; they have an infernal fear of that, because you have ammunition carts and a howitzer in the yard." "Artillery?" said the friends, amazed. "Yes," nodded the forester; "and through the loopholes of the fence they have seen blue carts and horses, and the carriage of a cannon."

"Karl's new potato carts and the teams," exclaimed Anthony, "and the fire-tub."

"That will be the howitzer," replied the forester. "On my way here I peeped into the inn-yard, and watched whether I could get hold of some acquaintance. Rebecca came running into the yard with water buckets. I whistled gently, and called her behind the stable. 'Is it you, old trump?' said the foolish thing; 'take care that you do not burn your head off. I have no time to lose on you; I must wait on the gentlemen, they wish for coffee.' 'Why not champagne?' said I. 'They are very civil, no doubt, my pretty lass,' says I, for by flattery one gains the women. 'You are an ugly old fellow yourself,' said the girl, laughing at me; 'make haste and begone.' 'They will not hurt you, little Rebecca,' said I again, and gave her a pinch on the cheek. 'That's no affair of yours, you old wizard,' said the little salamander; 'if I scream the whole roomful will come to my help: I will have nothing to do with you.' 'Don't be so stubborn, my child,' said I; 'be a good girl, fill my bottle there, and bring it out to me. In bad times one must do something for one's friends.' Thereupon the creature snatched the bottle out of my hand and said: 'Wait, but keep quiet,' and ran back with her buckets. After a while she came again, and brought me my bottle quite full of brandy. She is a kind-hearted creature. And when she gave me the bottle she called after me, 'When you see the young gentlemen in the castle, tell them that those within have great fear of their artillery; they questioned us if it was true that there were cannon. I told them that I knew well there must be such a thing on the estate.' So I slept away, and crawled in the ditch past the fellows with scythes, who are on watch behind our yard. When I was a hundred steps in advance, I took to running, and they swore after me till I got here—that is the state of the case."

"That is an awkward idea about the fire; if they understand the work, they can smoke us out like badgers."

"This threshold is of stone, and the front door is high above the ground," said the forester.

"I am not afraid of the flames, but of the smoke and light," answered Fink. "When our windows are lighted up, our men will shoot worse. It is lucky for us that these gentlemen on English saddles, who lead the enemy, have hitherto hardly ever taken any stronghold but such as are fortified by petticoats. We must throw all the men into the front part of the house, and keep at the back only the necessary sentries, and trust to Rebecca's lie."

Fresh cartridges were distributed, and a new arrangement of the men was made, more were placed in the halls of the tower, in the upper and lower stories, and on the platform. The smith commanded down-stairs, and Anthony on the upper floor; the forester remained with a small division as a reserve. And it was high time, for again a loud buzzing, words of command, the step of approaching men, and the rolling of carts, were to be heard in the distance.

"Keep your balls in your barrels," cried Fink, "and fire only on those who press near the door."

The carts with the screens approached as before, the Polish word of command sounded, and the enemy opened a hot fire. This time it was exclusively directed against the fated door and the windows near it. Like heavy blows the balls thundered against the door and the brick-work: more than one found their way through the window-openings, and hit the ceiling above the heads of the defenders. Fink called the forester: "You must make a bold stroke, old fellow; place your men at the back door, open the gate, slip out close round the house, and take the fellows in the three carts to the left, who have ventured too near the house, in flank. Get as near them as you can, you may pick them off if you aim well. The carts have no protection; before the rabble from behind can run after you, you will be back again. Be quick and cautious; I will give you a signal with my whistle when it is time to rush out of the shadow of the wall."

The forester collected his men and hastened into the yard, and Fink rushed up-stairs to Anthony. The fire of the enemy became hotter. "This time they are in earnest," said Anthony; "our men, too, get excited."

"There is the danger," cried Fink, pointing through a hole in the wall to a great unwieldy mass which was being slowly pushed nearer. It was a harvest cart, broad, and loaded to a great height; directed by an invisible hand, it moved straight upon the middle of the castle. "A fire waggon! on the top the yellow bundles of straw are shining. Their object is clear; they have hold of the pole, and are pushing the cart towards the door. Now is the time to aim, none of the villains who are pushing must be allowed to return." He flew up-stairs to the tower, and called to the men who were posted on the platform, "All depends upon you. As soon as you see the men who push the cart, fire; wherever you see a skull or a leg, fire. All who push that cart must be killed."

The cart advanced slowly, Fink raised his double-barrelled rifle, and pressed the butt to his cheek, twice he aimed, and twice he drew it back discontentedly. The cart was loaded so high, that it was impossible to see the persons who pushed it on. This was a moment of agonising suspense on both sides, the fire of the enemy also ceased, all eyes were



turned to the peaceable cart, that was to put a deadly end to the obstinate struggle. At length the shoulders of the hindmost who were pressing against the end of the pole became visible. A double shot flashed from Fink's rifle, two yelling cries were heard, the cart stopped, the men who were pushing pressed closer to one another, two dark spots were seen on the ground. Fink loaded, a wild smile hovered about his lips. A furious volley at the tower was the enemy's answer, one of the men on the tower was shot through the breast, his musket fell over the parapet and rattled on the ground, the man fell at Fink's feet. Fink cast a slight glance on the fallen man and rammed down the second bullet. Then some figures flew quick as lightning out of the shade up to the waggon an energetic shout was heard, and the machine again moved on. "Brave young fellows," muttered Fink; "they are doomed to death." More of the bodies at the pole became visible, again Fink aimed, and the deadly balls flew close together to the pole of the cart. Again there was a doleful cry, but the cart moved forwards. It was not more than thirty paces from the door, it was high time. The shrill tone of the whistle vibrated through the night air; from the windows of the upper story burst a fiery volley, and from the left side of the house loud cries were heard. The forester sallied forth, a crowd of dark shadows rushed toward the screen that was nearest the corner of the house, a moment of close fighting, some shots, and the surprised enemies ran back, frightened, from the screened waggons into the open field. For the third time the deadly double flash was seen from the tower, and struck the pole of the harvest waggon. Seized with a panic, the men rushed out of its shadow, back into the darkness for safety. But they rushed to their destruction. From the tower, and from the windows of the upper story, balls followed and struck down all who were unsheltered. In the castle they saw that more than one dropped. Furious cries were raised from behind, and a dark line advanced with quick steps, to receive the fugitives. A general fire from the whole body began against every part of the house. Then the enemy retreated with as much rapidity as they had come on, they took the killed and wounded, and the carts with screens out of range. Only the fire-waggon remained—a dark mass before the door. The firing ceased, and an awful stillness followed the deadly fight.

Anthony and Fink met in the hall upstairs, and directly after the forester came. Silently, both the friends looked at each other, to see if either was hurt. "Admirably done, forester," cried Fink; "ask for admission to the baron and report to him."

"And beg Fraulein Leonora to give you materials for bandages; we have had some casualties," said Anthony, sorrowfully, looking at two men who were sitting on the floor of the hall, leaning against the wall and groaning.

"Here comes a third," cried Fink, pointing to a dark body which was carried by two men slowly down the tower stairs. "I fear the man is dead; he lay like a log of wood at my feet."

"Who is it?" asked Anthony, shuddering.

"Borowski, the tailor," answered one of the bearers, in a suppressed voice.

"What a horrible night!" exclaimed Anthony, turning away.

"There is no time to think of that," said Fink; "the life of man is only valuable when he has the equanimity to leave it on a proper occasion. The main thing is to keep that firebrand off our necks. It is not impossible that the rogue may yet succeed in lighting it; but where it is, it will do us little harm." At this moment a bright glare shone through the

loop-hole of the tower. Every one rushed to the windows. A dazzling flame arose from the part of the waggon turned towards the castle, and with a sudden jerk the heavy mass rolled against its walls. A single man sprang back from the waggon; in an instant a dozen weapons were aimed at him.

"Hold!" cried out Fink, with a piercing voice; "it is too late; spare him! He is a brave fellow, and the mischief is done."

"Merci, monsieur! au revoir!" cried a voice from below, and the man rushed away from the house.

In a moment the waggon was burning; the yellow forked flames rose out of the straw and brushwood which was at top, and white sheaves of fire darted, crackling in all directions, through the rising blaze. The house was suddenly lighted up; the smoke penetrated thickly through the smashed windows.

"That is powder!" cried Fink. "Quiet men, quiet! We will keep the enemy off, if they come on again. You, Anthony, try and master the fire."

"Water!" called out the men; "the window-frame is burning."

Outside, the words of command sounded again, the drum was beat, and, with wild shouts of victory, the enemy, forming a line of *tirailleurs*, advanced against the house. The fire of the besiegers recommenced, in order to prevent the flames from being extinguished. Water was brought up from the water-butt in the yard, and poured on the forked flames playing in the window. It was dangerous work, for the front of the house being illuminated, the shots of the *tirailleurs*, who pressed more and more boldly on, were directed against any figure that became visible. The defendants looked anxiously at the flames, and answered the fire of the enemy but slackly. The guards, in the yard, looked more behind than before them—the disorder became general—the moment of greatest danger had arrived—all appeared lost!

A man called down from the tower, "They are bringing short ladders from the village; I see axes in their hands."

"They are trying to get over the fence—they are knocking the windows of the lower floor down!" cried out the terrified men, confusedly. The forester rushed into the yard; Fink collected some of the men near him, led them along to the wing of the house to which the men with the ladders were approaching. All screamed in confusion; even Fink's threatening commands were no longer attended to by the men.

At this moment several men with poles ran across from the yard to the door of the front hall. "Make way!" shouted out a stout figure; "this is smith's work!" The man pulled the bolt of the door back; the opening was completely filled by the burning waggon. The smith pushed the heavy pole with all his might, in spite of smoke and flame, into the burning wood of the waggon. "Help me, you hares!" he cried out, indignantly, "He is right," exclaimed Anthony, "come here, men!" Planks and cart-poles were dragged forward, and the men advanced undauntedly into the smoke, and poked and thrust them into the glowing mass. More than once they were forced to retire, but the smith always drove them back to the fire. At last he contrived, by pushing, to remove several faggots from the top. The dark sky could now be perceived, through the blazing flames, at the upper part of the door; a draught of air followed, and the smoke became less stifling. "Now we shall have the whole concern!" he cried, triumphantly, as one by one the burning trusses flew to the ground, where, singly, they became harmless, and burnt out. The waggon was quickly unloaded—burning feather-beds

and logs of wood fell to the ground. Anthony had half the door closed, because now the enemy's balls were passing through the flames. The workers were obliged to manage their levers from the sides. The racks of the waggons fell charred, and the workmen, with joyful shouts, placed their poles together against the frame, and pushed the ruins of the waggon several steps from the door. The door was rapidly closed, and the men, looking black as devils, and with burnt clothes, wished each other joy, with loud cheers.

"Such a night as this makes good friends," exclaimed the smith, delighted, and in the joy of his heart he seized Anthony's hand, which was as black as his own.

During this time the axes of the besiegers thundered against the boards of several windows of the lower story; the broken boards fell with a crash, and Fink's voice shouted out, "Strike them down with the butt-ends!" Anthony and the smith flung themselves against the windows through which the besiegers were trying to enter; but the most dangerous part of the work was done. Fink came to meet them, with the bloody axe of one of the insurgents in his hand. He threw the axe away, and called out to the men who were with Anthony, "Nail new boards to the windows! I hope the butchery is over."

A few more volleys from without, and some single shots from the tower, and then all was still again in the castle and on the plain. A red light still shone on the walls of the castle, but the glow grew fainter and greyer. Out of doors, the wind rose, and drove away the smoke which was whirling about the windows, and rising from the burnt fragments at the door, along the walls, into the darkness. The pure night air filled the passage and hall again, and again the starlight twinkled down peacefully on the faces of the defenders—on hollow eyes and pale cheeks. The forces of the struggling parties were exhausted, in the house as well as in the open field.

"What o'clock is it?" asked Fink, approaching Anthony, who was observing the movements of the enemy through the loopholes of the hall.

"Past midnight," answered Anthony.

They went up to the tower, and looked round. The pasture-grounds about the castle were empty. "Those good fellows have gone to sleep," said Fink; "the fires down there, also, are going out; the sound of individual voices only comes from the village; nothing but the shadows there show that we are blockaded. They have set a chain of sentries in a wide circle round the house. They are our watchmen. We have some hours of rest before us; and as we shall not get much sleep to-morrow, we must let our people make use of this time. Leave only the most necessary sentries, and have them relieved every two hours. If you do not object, I will go to bed. Let me be awake if anything stirs outside. You will take care of the night watch, I know." Hereupon Fink went to his room, threw himself upon his bed, and fell soundly asleep in a few minutes. Anthony hastened into the guard-room, and, with the assistance of the forster, arranged the sentries and settled the reliefs. "I shall not sleep, at all events," said the old man; "first, on account of my years, and then in my character of sportsman. I will, if you please, command the night watch, and see that all is right."

Once more Anthony walked over the yard and stables. Here, also quiet had been re-established; the horses only were stamping impatiently on the hard ground. He opened gently the doors of the women's rooms; in the second the wounded had been laid. When Anthony entered, Leonora was sitting on a stool by the straw bed—at her feet two of the strange

women. He bent over the bed of the wounded. The palid faces and matted hair of the poor men contrasted strongly with the white pillows which Leonora had brought from her own bed. "How are they?" whispered Anthony, gently.

"We have endeavoured to dress their wounds," answered Leonora; "the forester says there is hope for both."

"Then," continued Anthony, "leave the women to nurse them, and take some hours of rest yourself."

"Don't speak to me of rest," said Leonora, rising; "we are in the chamber of death!" She took him by the hand, and led him to the other side; there she lifted up a dark cloak, and pointed to a human body lying under it.

"He is dead!" she said, in a hollow voice. "When I lifted him up with these hands, he died! His blood hangs to my clothes; and it is not only his that has been shed to-day. 'Twas I," she exclaimed, with wild look, pressing Anthony's hand convulsively; "it was I who began this bloodshed! How I shall bear this curse, or live after this day, I know not. If there is any place left for me in the world, it is this room! Leave me, Wohlfart, and think no more of me."

She turned away, and seated herself on the stool by the straw bed. Anthony put the cloak over the dead man, and silently left the room.

He went to the guard-room, and took his rifle. "I go up to the tower, forester," he said.

"Everyone has his own way," muttered the old man. "The other is wiser—he sleeps. But it will be cool up there; he shall not remain without a cloak." He sent a man up with a peasant's cloak, and ordered him to stay with the gentleman. Anthony made the man lie down to sleep, and wrapped himself up in the warm covering. Thus he sat, quietly leaning his head against the parapet over which Leonora had bent when she fired. His thoughts flew over the plain—from the gloomy present to the uncertain future. He looked over the circle of hostile sentries, and the still darker circle of fir-woods, which kept him prisoner here, and held him, as by a spell, in a situation which appeared to him as strange and adventurous as he had ever read of in books. With a weary eye, and with as much calmness as if it had been that of another, he contemplated his own destiny; and he could quietly look into the depths of his own soul, which the fluctuating feelings of the day had hitherto concealed from him. His former life passed before him. The figure of the noble lady on the balcony of the castle—the beautiful girl in the boat, among her swans—the dazzling lights of the dancing-room—the sorrowful hour when the noble lady had placed her jewels in his hands—all the moments when Leonora's eyes had so lovingly sought his—all these times passed before him, and he distinctly perceived the spell by which they had surrounded him. Now, all that had fettered his imagination, perverted his judgment, and flattered his self-respect, appeared to him as an illusion.

It was an error of his childish soul which had been nurtured by his vanity. Alas! all the dazzling glory had long passed away, which made the life of the noble family appear so great, honourable, and worthy to be longed for by the poor son of the auditor. Another and a purer feeling had taken its place—a tender friendship for the only one who had shown herself great in that circle, when the others had broken down. And now she was torn from him also. He felt that it was so, and must be so evermore. He felt it in this hour, without pain, as something natural, that could not be otherwise. He felt also that he himself was thus freed from the ties that retained him here. He raised his head and looked over the

forest into the distance. He was angry with himself that this loss did not give him more pain, and then again for feeling it a loss. Had there ever been a longing at the bottom of his soul? had he ever thought of winning the beautiful girl for his future bride? had he ever dreamt of finding a home in the family for whom he was now working? If there had been hours in which he had weakly given way to this feeling, now he condemned it. He had not always been guided by right motives; he had secretly thought of himself when he watched Leonora. That was wrong; and it served him right that he now stood alone among strangers in a relation that pressed sorely on him, because it was undefined; in a position from which he could not now, for some time, free himself.

And yet he felt free. "I will do my duty, and only work for her happiness," he said aloud. "But her happiness!" He thought of Fink, and of the character of his friend, which he could not help admiring, though he so often vexed him. "Would he return her love? would he ever allow himself to be fettered by this connexion? Poor Leonora!" he sighed.

Thus Anthony mused, until a bright glimmer advanced from the northern edge of the horizon to the east, and a faint grey rose from thence on the sky, the chilling forerunner of the morning sun. Then Anthony cast a last glance on the landscape around him. He could already count the sentinels of the peasants, who surrounded the castle in pairs, and here and there the point of a scythe sparkled in the light. Anthony bent down and awoke the man who had fallen asleep by the puddle of blood of his dead comrade, then he descended to the guard-room, threw himself on the straw which the forester had carefully shaken out for him, and fell asleep, just when the lark flew up from the moist earth to allure the sun by its joyful call.

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## CHAPTER V.

AFTER an hour the forester awoke the sleeper. Anthony started up, and looked confused at the strange scene around him.

"It is almost a sin to disturb you," said the kind-hearted old man. "Outside all is quiet, except the cavalry of the enemy, who have marched off on the road to Rosnin."

"Marched off? Then we are free," cried Anthony.

"Saving the infantry," said the forester. "They are still two to one against us, and keep fast hold of us. And now I have something else to tell you. There is no more water in the butt; our men have drunk half, and the rest was poured on the fire. For my own part, I don't care for that drink, but the castle is full of men who will hardly hold out the day without it."

Anthony sprang up. "That is a bad morning greeting, my old friend."

"The pump is broken," continued the old man; "but what do you say to sending one of the women to the brook? The sentinels would not hurt the women. Perhaps they would not prevent them from bringing some buckets of water."

"Some buckets," said Anthony; "that will be of little use."

"It will be something to cheer the heart," said the old man; "we

must be economical with it. If Rebecca were here she would get us water; we must try it with one of the others. Those cursed fellows are not bad to women, if they are only a little saucy. If you like, I will try one of our girls."

The forester called down into the kitchen—"Suska!" and the Polish girl came up from the ground floor.

"Mark you, Suska!" said the forester, knowingly, "when the baron awakes he will require fresh water; the water in the castle is at an end; we have beer and schnapps enough to drink, but what Christian could wash his hands in beer? Be quick and take the buckets, and fetch us some water. Run down to the brook; you will get on with the men there, I am sure. Don't gossip too long with them, otherwise you will get a scolding from the master. And mark you! ask them why they stand there with their spears when their horsemen are gone off. We should have no objection if they would be off also."

The girl willingly took the buckets, the forester opened the back door, and the little lass trotted down to the water. Anthony looked uneasily after her. The girl went to the brook undisturbed, and without minding the sentries, who were standing about twenty paces from her, watching her with curiosity. At last one of the scythemen went up to her, the girl put the buckets down, crossed her arms, and began a peaceful chat; then the scytheman took the buckets, stooped down to the water to fill them, and handed them to the girl; slowly she brought the buckets back. The forester opened the door again, and said, smiling, "Bravo, Suska! what did the sentinel say to you?"

"Only nonsense," answered the girl, blushing. "He told me I should open the door for him and his comrades when they came again to the castle."

"If that is all," said the forester, smiling, "then they will come again."

"To be sure they will," said the lass; "the horsemen are gone to meet the military at Rosmin. When they return, the whole are to attack the castle—so the man said."

"We won't let them in," said the forester; "none shall come through that door but your sweetheart down there. I am sure you have promised to let him in, if he comes alone, and at night."

"No!" answered Suska, irritated; "but I could not be angry."

"Perhaps we could try it again," said the forester, looking at Anthony.

"I doubt it," he answered. "One of the officers is riding up to the sentinel; the poor lad will get a rough salute for his civility. Come, and let us distribute the scanty provision. Half the first bucket is for the family, and half for us men; the second is for morning soup for the women and children." He poured the water into the different vessels, and placed the smith as guard over it. While pouring it in, he said to the forester, "This is the hardest part of the siege. I do not yet know how we shall hold out for the day."

"Anything may be done," answered the forester, consolingly.

It was a bright spring morning. The sun rose cloudless behind the farm, and by its mild beams soon warmed the moist air that was hanging round the walls of the castle. The people sought eagerly the sunny corner of the court-yard, the men sat together in little groups with their wives and children, and all seemed in good spirits. Anthony entered into the midst of them. "We must have patience till noon—perhaps till the afternoon, then our soldiers will come."

"If the others remain as quiet as they now are, we may wait calmly," the smith replied. "They are standing as stiff as hedge-poles."

"They lost their courage last night," said another, contemptuously.

"It was a straw fire; the smith flung their trusses from the waggon. They have done their worst," cried out a third.

The smith crossed his arms, and smiled proudly, and his wife looked up to him with delight.

Now life returned to the upper story. The baron rang the bell, and asked for information. Anthony hastened up, and gave a report to him and the ladies; then he went to Fink's room, and awoke his friend, who was still fast asleep.

"Good morning, Tony," exclaimed Fink, stretching himself comfortably. "I will come down in a moment. If you could help me to some water, I should feel most grateful to you."

"I will fetch you a bottle of wine from the cellar," answered Anthony. "You must wash with wine to-day."

"Heigho!" cried Fink, "is that the state of the case? Don't let it be red wine, at least."

"We have only a few bottles altogether," continued Anthony.

"You are a bird of ill omen," said Fink, looking for his boots. "How much more beer is there in your cellar?"

"Just enough to give one drink to the men; a little bottle of brandy is now our greatest treasure."

Fink whistled the air of the Dessauer march. "Do you see now, my son, that your soft-heartedness for the women and children was a little sentimental? I see you in my mind's eye, standing with your sleeves turned up killing the lean cow, and with your old scrupulousness, putting it by bits into the mouths of the hungry people, you in the middle, and fifty gaping mouths around you. Make directly a dozen birch rods, in a few hours, the cries of the hungry children will rise to heaven, and you will be obliged, in spite of your charity, to whip the whole lot. For the rest, I think we did not behave badly last night. I have slept my fill, and am prepared for anything. Now let us look after the enemy." The friends went to the tower; Anthony told him what he had heard. Fink examined carefully the circle of sentinels, and looked with his glass along the bright lines of the cart-roads, till they were lost in the woods. "Our situation is too peaceable to be consolatory," he said at last, closing his telescope.

"They mean to starve us out," said Anthony, gravely.

"They are cunning enough to think of this, and they do not calculate badly, for in confidence I must say, I have great doubts if we have any hope of relief."

"We may count upon Karl," said Anthony.

"And on my brown mare too," answered Fink; "but it is possible that my poor Blackfoot is at this moment in the unhappy position of furnishing a seat to one of the insurgents. Whether young Karl may not have fallen into the hands of some of the troops that swarm about this country, or whether he has found the regular troops at all, or whether these are inclined to march to our assistance; in fine, whether they are clever enough to come in the right time, and last of all, whether they are strong enough to disperse the troops which intercept their way to us; these, my boy, are all questions which may very well be raised, and I would rather eat all the blackberries in the world than give a cheerful answer to them."

"We could try a sally, but it would be a bloody one," answered Anthony.

"Pooh," said Fink. "But what is worse, it would be to no purpose. We might overthrow one band perhaps, but the next hour we should meet with another. Nothing but victorious assistance can help us out of this pinch. As long as we can keep within these walls, we are strong, but in the open field with women and children, a dozen horsemen would ride us down."

"Then we must remain," said Anthony, gloomily.

"Wisely spoken; the whole wisdom of life, is, in the end, not to put questions to oneself and to others which cannot be answered. The affair threatens to be troublesome."

The two friends then descended: hour passed away after hour, slow hours of leaden inactivity. Now Anthony, now Fink, looked through the glass, at the openings in the wood; there was nothing of any importance to be seen, the enemy's patrols came and went, troops of armed country people marched to the village, and were sent off in different directions, and the chain of sentries were regularly relieved every two hours. The besiegers were occupied in searching and disarming the villages of the neighbourhood, in order afterwards to be able to make an attack with their united forces on the castle.

The Germans were surrounded in their walls, like a wild beast in its den, and the hunters waited with quiet security the hour when hunger, fire, or arms, would inevitably drive the conquered ones out.

Meanwhile, Fink tried to occupy the people; the men were ordered to clean and brush their arms and accoutrements, they formed ranks, and Fink examined the muskets one by one; then powder and lead were distributed, bullets moulded, and cartridges made. The women were directed by Anthony to clean the house and yard, as well as they could, without water. All this had the good effect of keeping them in activity for some hours.

The sun rose higher, and the air wafted to them the faint tolling of the bell in the nearest village. "The first meal has been frugal enough," said Anthony to his comrade; "the potatoes have been roasted in the ashes, the bacon and meat are at an end, the cook cannot bake for want of water."

"As long as we have a cow in the stable," answered Fink, "we possess a treasure which we can show to the hungry folk. Then there will remain the mice in the castle, and finally, our boots. Whoever has been condemned to eat beefsteaks in this country, cannot consider leather boots as a tough dish."

The forester interrupted the conversation, by reporting "A single rider comes from the farm to the castle, a female comes after him; I bet it is Rebecca."

The rider approached the door of the hall, waving a white handkerchief; he stopped near the charred ruins of the harvest-waggon, and looked up at the windows of the upper story. It was the envoy of the day before.

"We must not be uncivil and keep the gentleman waiting," said Fink; he drew back the bolt, and stepped out on the threshold unarmed. The Pole saluted him silently, and Fink raised his cap.

"I told you yesterday evening," the horseman began, "that I should have the pleasure of seeing you again to-day."

"Yes," answered Fink; "you are the gentleman who smoked us so well. It was a pity to lose the harvest-waggon."



"You yesterday prevented your people from firing at me," continued the Pole, in German; "I am grateful to you for it, and wish to acknowledge it. As I hear there are ladies in the house, the girl is bringing them some milk. We know that there is no water in the castle, and I am anxious that the ladies should not suffer privations on account of our quarrel."

"You rascal," muttered the forester.

"If you will allow me to furnish you with some bottles of wine from our cellar, in return for the milk, I accept your present with thanks," answered Fink. "I presume that the inn does not afford you any superfluity of that article."

"Thanks," said the Pole, smiling. Rebecca ran with her jug to the door of the court, gave the milk, and received from the grumbling forester the bottles of wine. "Though you are provided with wine, it cannot replace water; your garrison is numerous, and we hear that you have many women and children in the house."

"I should not consider it a misfortune," answered Fink, "if the women and children were obliged to drink wine with us men for some days, until you do us the pleasure, as I asked you yesterday, of leaving this property and the well yonder."

"Do not hope it, sir," said the Pole, gravely; "we shall use every kind of force to disarm you. We know now that you have no artillery, and it is in our power at any moment to force the entrance into this house; but you have behaved like brave men, and we do not wish to go further than is necessary."

"Courteous and reasonable," said Fink, assentingly.

"Therefore I make you a proposal which will not wound your feelings of honour. There is no hope of relief for you. A strong body of our troops is stationed between your soldiers and this village; a collision between the two armies is expected within a few days, at some little distance from here, and your commanders are therefore unable to detach any part of their force. I tell you nothing new, for you know this fact as well as I do. I guarantee, on my word of honour, a safe conduct to you and all who are in this house, if you surrender your weapons and the castle. We are ready to give you and the ladies an escort in any direction you may choose as far as we occupy the territory."

Fink answered more seriously than he had done hitherto: "May I ask from whose lips the word of honour comes, that has just been given to me?"

"Colonel Zlotowsky," answered the rider, with a slight inclination of his head.

"We owe you thanks, sir, for your proposal," answered Fink. "I have no doubt of the sincerity of your offer, and will also assume that you have sufficient influence over the men who accompany you, to enable you to keep these terms. But not being master of this house, I must communicate the proposal to him."

"I will wait," answered the Pole; he rode back a distance of about thirty paces, and halted in front of the door.

Fink closed the door, and said to Anthony, "Quick, to the baron! what is your own opinion?"

"To hold out," answered Anthony.

They found the baron in his room, supporting his head with his hands, his face distorted, a picture of suffering and nervous excitement. Fink informed him of the Pole's offer, and begged for his decision.

The baron answered, "Perhaps I have up to this moment suffered

more than any of the brave men who have risked their lives in this house. It is a terrible feeling to have to sit helpless, when honour calls upon you to be in the first rank; but for the same reason, I have no right to dictate anything to you. He who is unable to fight, has no longer a right to decide when the fight shall cease. Nay, I have hardly a right to give my own opinion, lest it should influence your generous minds. Besides, unfortunate as I am, I do not even know the men who defend me; I cannot judge of their disposition or powers. I leave all to you, and place the fate of my family confidently in your hands. Heaven will reward you for what you are doing for me—not for me, for God's sake, not for me, that would be too great a sacrifice," burst out the agitated man, raising his folded hands, and gazing on high with his lustreless eyes, "think of nothing but the cause we defend."

"If you place such confidence in us," said Fink, with chivalrous manner, "we are resolved on holding the castle, as long as there is the faintest hope of succour. Meanwhile serious contingencies may take place; our men may refuse to continue the fight, or the enemy may force their way in."

"My wife and daughter, like me, beg you will not think of them in this hour. Go, gentlemen," cried the baron, stretching out his arms, "the honour of an old soldier lies in your hands."

The two men bowed low before the blind man, and left the room. "There is some honour in these people still," said Fink, nodding his head, as they were going down. He opened the door, and the officer approached.

"The Baron von Rothsattel thanks you for your offer. He is determined to defend his house, and the property of those who have placed themselves under his protection, against your attacks to the last extremity. We do not accept your proposition."

"Then take the consequences," cried out the rider, "and the responsibility of all that must now happen."

"I accept the responsibility," said Fink; "but I have one request to make: besides the women and children of the country people, there are two ladies in this castle, the wife and daughter of the Baron von Rothsattel; if by chance you should succeed in entering this house, I commend the defenceless to your chivalrous protection."

"I am a Pole," said the rider, proudly drawing himself up. He took off his hat, and cantered back to the farm.

"He looks like a bold lad," said Fink, turning to the men, who had hastened out of the guard-room. "But, my men, if one has the choice of relying on the promises of an enemy, or on this little tube of iron, I am always of opinion that one would rather trust"—and he held up his rifle—"to what one holds in one's hand. The Pole has promised us a safe conduct, because he knows that his bands will in a few hours disperse before our soldiers. We should be a nice morsel for him, about thirty muskets! And when the cavalry comes, whom we have called, and do not find us in the house, but only this rabble, with their toad-spits, they would abuse us nicely, and we should be disgraced for ever."

"Did he not mean it honestly?" asked one of the men, hesitatingly.

Fink took the man familiarly by the collar of his coat. "I believe that he did mean it honestly, my chap; but I ask you, how much obedience is to be found amongst these people? We should not turn the corner of the wood before another band would come upon us, and your wives and property would be ill-treated; therefore I reckon we do best to show our teeth."

His hearers assented with acclamation, and cheers were given for the young gentlemen of the castle.

"We thank you," said Fink. "Now every one to their posts, for maybe you will get some bloody heads again. This will occupy them an hour," continued Fink, turning to Anthony. "I do not believe in an attack by day, but it is better for them to be on duty than to be laying their heads together. After all, it is awkward that these men should have heard what passed."

The strict service that Fink now organized could not prevent the faint-heartedness which gradually stole over the little garrison as the sun rose higher in the sky. The words of the Pole had been heard by many—even by the women, who had opened their door from curiosity, and pressed into the hall. Slowly, by little and little, fear fell on their hearts, and, like a contagious disease, spread from one to the other. It broke out in the women's room. Suddenly some of them felt a longing for water; they complained of thirst, first timidly, then louder. They thronged to the kitchen door, and set up a loud sobbing. Ere long all the children were screaming for water, and many of the men who, under other circumstances, would never have thought of drinking it, felt themselves indescribably unhappy. Anthony sent for the last bottles of wine from the cellar, cut the last loaf of bread, soaked some mouthfuls for each in the wine, and distributed them, with an earnest assurance that this was the best remedy against thirst; that if they put them in their mouths they would not be able to drink water the whole day, even if one offered to pay them. This lasted for a while, but terror found other doors through which it entered. Many of the men began to consider what they would lose by giving up an old musket, and receiving in return liberty and the right of going wherever they pleased. This view was anticipated and combated by the forester, who placed himself in the middle of the guard-room, and said resolutely, "I tell you, Gottlieb Fitzner, and you, fat Bœkel, that giving up the muskets is a trifle to us all; there is only one drawback, that whichever of you should entertain such a villainous idea, would be a low, cowardly rascal, into whose face I would spit whenever I met him." Thereupon Fitzner and Bœkel eagerly agreed with the forester, and Bœkel declared he would do the same to such a fellow. And thus the danger was averted for the time; but the guards, when relieved, remained in anxious conversation. The forces of the castle were compared to those of the enemy, and, at last, the weakness of the fence in the yard became the prevailing subject of timid criticism. It was clear that the next attack would be made there, and even the bold ones were of opinion that the fence of boards could only oppose a very slight resistance. Even the faithful smith shook the fence with his hand, and was not pleased with the manner in which it was nailed together. During the mid-day hours these attacks of faint-heartedness were not dangerous, as the greater part of the men with muskets in their hands were expecting every minute the approach of the enemy. But when the sun began to sink without any attack having been made, or any succours announced by the sentinel of the tower, inactivity and relaxation combined to make the evil general. The dinner was unsatisfactory—potatoes with their skins all burnt, and salt. Of course, the people began again to feel thirsty, and again the women came to Anthony lamenting and complaining that his remedy had only served for a short time. Amongst the men, also, the fear of hunger and thirst flew from one to another—from the guard-room to the yard, and from thence to the tower. Anthony had double rations of brandy distributed, but that did

not do with all. The men did not become refractory—there was too much good in them for that—they only grew weak and downcast. Fink looked with a contemptuous smile on these symptoms of a state of feeling which was unintelligible to a man of his elastic spirit and iron nerve. But Anthony, who was beset by every one with prayers and complaints, felt the full extent of the embarrassment of these hours. Something must be done, or all was lost. So he went into the courtyard, and resolved on sacrificing the cow. He went up to her and patted her on the neck: "Liese, poor beast, it is your turn now." As he was leading her out by the rope, his eye fell upon the empty water-butt, and a happy thought struck him. The ground was only a few feet above the level of the brook; the whole country was rich in springs; it was probable that they might find water at a little depth. It would be a trifling work for the garrison to dig a well, and by piling the earth dug out against the fence, its solidity would be greatly increased. One main point was, that the work would set all idle hands in motion. It might continue hours, or it might be days. He knew from former experiments that the water about the castle was muddy, and not good for use, but this mattered little to-day. Anthony looked at the sun, and saw that not a minute was to be lost.

He summoned the engineer into the yard, and, when he joyfully agreed, all the disengaged hands in the castle, the women and the stronger children, were collected. The tools of the labourers were brought, and in a few minutes ten men were occupied with pickaxes and spades in digging a hole in the yard with sloping sides. The women and children, under the inspection of the engineer, piled up the excavated earth against the fence. Some of the men and women were called by Anthony to kill the poor cow, which was once more shown to the people before she succumbed to the fatality of the day. Immediately everybody was busily employed. The hole, which was made much wider at the surface than was necessary for a regular pump, deepened visibly; a wall rose against the wooden fence, as if raised from the earth by benevolent gnomes. The people worked as they had never done before in their lives; the men strove which could dig the fastest, little barefooted legs sprang enthusiastically over the ground, and wooden clogs and slippers left deep traces in it; every one wished to help, and there were more hands than there was space for them to work in. All fears had disappeared, and gay jests flew to and fro. When Fink came by, he said to Anthony, "You are a converter of the heathen. You understand how to take care of the mental welfare of your congregation."

"The congregation are working," answered Anthony, with more cheerfulness than he had felt during the last four-and-twenty hours.

The pit was so deep, that they were obliged to descend with short ladders. The ground became wet; the men worked in a marsh; at last the mud had to be taken out in buckets, but the people worked eagerly, and the buckets flew from one hand to another. Like children, they hurrah'd, with loud laughter, at every spot of mud which fell upon the impetuous workmen. The wall rose already a foot high above the fence, and as there was no turf, the people beat pieces of wood and stone on to the inner slope, with such strength that the mass became as hard as plaster. Anthony could scarcely keep the small wicket free. The sentries by the side of the brook became uneasy. Horsemen galloped along the line, and looked at the new fortifications. Sometimes one would venture near, but retreated as soon as the forester raised his rifle over the wall. Thus one hour after the other passed away, the sun set, and the red glow

of evening spread over the sky. The men in the yard did not heed it; they stood in the deep pit, up to their waists in water. It was a yellow muddy liquid, but the people looked into the opening as eagerly as if a treasure of liquid gold was bubbling up. At length, when the shadow of evening had fallen upon the opening, Anthony ordered the workmen to come out of the pit. A large cloth was brought, and laid upon the water-butt. The water was drawn out in buckets, and filtered through the cloth.

"First my horses," shouted the ploughboy, and snatched the buckets for the thirsty animals.

"When it has settled, it will be as good as the water of the brook," cried the smith, delighted.

The workmen did not tire of drawing out specimens of it, and every one confirmed triumphantly the opinion of that distinguished man. Meanwhile Anthony had new posts rammed into the top of the wall, which had grown as high as the floor of the upper story, and the strong boards of the potato-carts nailed to them as a shelter. When the darkness of night spread over the castle, the work was accomplished. The women bent unweariedly over the butt. Large pieces of meat were brought into the kitchen, a great fire was crackling there, and the pleasant prospect of a good supper filled the hearts of all the besieged. Then again the enemy's drum rolled outside, and the shrill cries of the whistle vibrated through the house. For a moment the men in the yard were struck with surprise. They had, during the last hours, thought little of the enemy; now they all rushed to the guard-room, and took up their arms. The lower story was rapidly furnished with a double number of men. The forester hastened with a strong division to the yard, and climbed on the new ramparts.

"The decisive moment is approaching," whispered Fink to Anthony. "Within the last few hours, large bands have entered the village, and since sunset a troop of horse. We cannot resist a second night. They will attack from all sides at once, and, with some scores of short ladders, penetrate into the castle; and they know that well, for, look, every troop advancing from the village is furnished with axes and ladders. Let us courageously pass through what cannot be avoided. Yours is the credit, if we are overcome like men, and not like cowards. I have been with the baron; he and the ladies are prepared; they will keep together in his room. If you have any voice remaining, when one of these gentlemen walks over you, remind him of the ladies. God bless you, Anthony! I take the yard, you the front."

"I cannot think," said Anthony, "that we shall be overcome. I never had such cheerful hope as at this moment."

"Hope of relief?" asked Fink, shrugging his shoulders, pointing through the window to the hostile troop. "If it comes in an hour, it comes too late. Since Rebecca's gun has driven off, we are in the hands of the enemy as soon as they venture upon a regular storm, and they will venture it. We must have no illusions that will last longer than a cigar. Your hand, my dear boy; farewell." He pressed Anthony's hand powerfully, and the proud smile gleamed again on his countenance. Thus they stood together, looking affectionately at one another, uncertain whether they should ever see each other again. "Farewell," cried Fink, raising his rifle, and disengaging his hand from his friend's; but he stopped, as if rooted to the floor, and listened, for above the roll of the enemy's drums, and the noise of the advancing hosts, a clear sound pealed through the night air, and a gay shrill fanfare was heard, which was answered from

the village by the regular sound of a charge, beaten by drummers of the line, then a heavy roll of musketry, and a distant hurrah.

"They come!" was shouted from all corners of the castle, "our soldiers come!"

The forester rushed into the hall. "The red caps!" he cried out; "they are riding up by the brook to the bridge. The infantry are storming the village.

"Every one into the yard," exclaimed Fink; "let us make a sally, my men—forwards!"

The barricade of the gate was torn down, the men were in a moment outside the rampart. Anthony could with difficulty keep back the engineer and some of the ploughmen as a garrison for the house. The forester walked along the line and gave orders to the men. Fink watched the state of the combat. The column of infantry was advancing in the village. The ceaseless roll of musketry betrayed the violence of the struggle, but the firing approached slowly nearer, the enemy gave way; already single fugitives came running from the farm. Meanwhile, a division of hussars crossed the brook; they were driving small bodies of the besiegers before them. Fink led the armed men round the house, and placed them at the corner which was nearest to the village. "Patience," he cried; "and when I lead you forward do not forget your war-cry, otherwise you will be overrun in the darkness and crushed like the enemy." He had the greatest trouble to keep the impatient men in the rank.

A single rider came flying up to them from the brook. "Hurrah, Rothsattel!" he cried in the distance.

"Sturm!" called out a dozen voices in return, and Anthony rushed from the ranks to meet the faithful fellow. "We have them!" cried Karl; "the enemy occupied the road to Rosmin, but I led our men a roundabout way through the forest."

A dark mass became visible at the end of the village; a horseman galloped in their front, the enemy's troops halted and collected near the farm. There the fight raged; the leaders drove the people back into the fire. "Now for it!" shouted out Fink. At a quick pace the little band crossed the pasture-ground, drew up by the side of the road, near the first barn, and a volley from twenty-five muskets poured into the enemy's flank. This caused confusion in their crowded ranks. The mass dispersed, and rushed in wild flight over the plain. Again the trumpet sounded behind the men from the castle, and the hussars charged at full speed a body that still kept its ground. Karl joined them and disappeared in the thick of the fight; they drove the enemy into the fields.

At that instant the Polish horse dashed forth from the village, and at their head the envoy, whose loud cries urged his men on against the hussars.

"Rothsattel!" was shouted by a young voice near Anthony, and in front of a troop of hussars a tall officer rushed forward to meet the Polish riders. Fink directed his rifle against the Polish colonel.

"Thank you," he cried, tottering on his horse, and his last expiring effort was to fire his pistol into the breast of the young hussar who was galloping against him. The hussar fell from his horse, and the other horse dashed away with the body of the Pole.

After a few minutes, the country surrounding the castle was clear of the enemy; night covered the fugitives, and the trees of the woods spread

their sheltering arms over the children of the land. Small divisions of the victors pursued the last bodies of the enemy.

In front of the castle, Anthony was kneeling on the ground, supporting the head of the fallen rider in his arms. With tears in his eyes, he looked from the dying man up to his friend, who was standing with a group of officers, much affected, by his side. The shouts of victory had died away, the country people surrounded the spot in gloomy silence. Slowly the motionless body was borne in the arms of the men to the house.

In the hall at the foot of the stairs, the baron and his daughter were standing ready to greet the welcome guests. When Leonora caught sight of the wounded man, she rushed among the bearers, and sank to the ground with a scream. The dying man was silently laid at the feet of the baron.

"Who is it?" moaned out the blind man, grasping the air with his hands. No one answered him, all drew back shyly.

"Father," murmured the wounded man, and a stream of blood gushed from his mouth.

"My son, my son!" screamed out the blind man, distractedly, and his knees gave way.

The son had left his garrison to join the army, which was gathering together near his parents' home, had obtained leave to join another regiment, and to accompany the squadron which was sent to his father's assistance. He wished to surprise his parents, and brought, with the relief, his bloody breast into the house, and death into their hearts.

A sad silence now lay over the high Slavonian castle. The storm had raged itself out; noiselessly fell the white petals from the blossoming trees, in the fields, and covered the earth in the starlight, pure, like a white pall. Where are you, lofty plans of the blind man, who had schemed, sinned, and suffered, in order to give you life? Listen, poor father, with suppressed breath; all is still in the castle, and on the tops of the trees, and yet you can no longer hear the one sound on which you have always thought, whilst building your castles in the air, whilst among your parchments, the heart's throb of your only son, the first *Majoratsherr* of the *Rothsattels*.

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## CHAPTER VI.

SORROWFUL days came over the castle, difficult to bear for all who lived within its walls. Sickness was at work in the baron's family, as a worm in a plant. After the dark hour in which the dying son was carried into his father's house, the baron never left his room. The little power which had remained to him was now entirely broken, grief had wasted his mind more than his body; for whole days he sat silently brooding, and neither Leonora's prayers, nor his wife's presence, could rouse him. When the dreadful intelligence was brought to the baroness, Anthony trembled lest the feeble link that still held her to life would be torn, and for weeks Leonora did not leave her bedside. But to the astonishment of everybody, the contrary ensued. The situation of her husband soon claimed her cares, and all her pain and weakness seemed to disappear. She showed herself stronger than she had been before, thought only of nursing the baron, and aroused herself sufficiently to sit for hours by his chair. The physician indeed shook his head, and said to Anthony that this sudden recovery was little to be trusted. Leonora was scarcely seen by any one during the first weeks that passed after the death of her brother.

When she occasionally left the sick-room, it was only to answer questions concerning the state of the invalids, or to request Anthony to send for the doctor.

During this time a wild spring passed over, and a stormy summer followed. The property had no longer to fear the terrors of civil war, but the heavy burden of the times lay oppressively on the land. Every day the beating of the drum or the signal of the trumpet was heard, in the quiet island among the woods; soldiers, who were often relieved, were quartered in the village and castle. Anthony had to work with all his power, to shelter men and horses, and provide for their support. The scanty means of the estate were soon exhausted, and without Fink's advanced rent, it would have been impossible to have gone on. In the farming, too, there was no end of interruptions. Many acres had been trampled down by the men and horses, during the days of the siege; requisitions for conveyances occupied all the teams; the people themselves became unruly in these turbulent times, and disliked regular work; but, on the whole, order was maintained, the farm work went on as had been arranged in the spring. The water meadows progressed better than the farm. All the workmen whom Fink had brought did not remain, but they were replaced by others who did as well. Indeed, the number of grey jackets and black hats increased, and the guards of Herr von Fink were spoken of in the whole neighbourhood as a daring set, with whom it was not desirable to quarrel. Fink himself was often absent; he had made the acquaintance of many officers, and renewed old friendships; he drove about the country, followed with eagerness the warlike operations, and acted as volunteer in a battle which was won over the insurgents some miles from the property. His defence of the castle had made him feared in the whole surrounding country, and all the hatred of the hostile part fell to his share, as well as the admiration of friends.

Some weeks had elapsed since the relief of the castle, when one day Leonora stepped to the back door, before which Anthony was conversing with the forester. Leonora looked across the yard, where there was now a pump, and over the fence, from which the mud wall had been removed, out upon the landscape, which was now glittering in the light green of summer. At last she said, with a sigh, "Summer has come, Wohlfart, without our noticing it."

Anthony looked anxiously in her pale face. "It is beautiful out in the wood now. I was yesterday at the forester's lodge. Since the last rains the wood and flowers are in full beauty. If you could only resolve to take a walk." Leonora shook her head, declining. "Who cares for me?" cried she, bitterly.

"I must give you a piece of intelligence which the forester has brought me just now," continued Anthony. "The man whom you shot was the wretch Bratzky; you did not kill him. If you reproached yourself for it, I can relieve you from that pain."

"Thank God!" exclaimed Leonora, clasping her hands.

"That night, when the forester came to join us in the castle, he saw the rascal sitting in the inn with his arm bound up. Yesterday he was taken by the soldiers as a prisoner to Rosmin."

"Yes," said the forester, joining them; "no ball will kill him; he looks higher." He put his hand to his neck, and made a significant gesture.

"It weighed upon me day and night," whispered Leonora to Anthony. "I felt as if a curse was upon me; dreadful visions tortured me in the dark, so that I started from my sleep and screamed. I always saw the



man before me as he clenched his fist and fell down, the blood flowing from his shoulder. Oh, Wohlfart, what we have gone through!" She leant against the door, and fixed her tearless eyes on the ground. In vain Anthony tried to calm her; she scarcely heard his words. A horse's hoof clattered on the pavement, and Fink's brown was led out. "Where is he going?" asked Leonora, hastily.

"I do not know," answered Anthony. "He is much away now; I do not see him for whole days."

"Why should he stay with us?" exclaimed Leonora. "This unhappy house is no place for him."

"I wish he would take care of himself," said the forester; "the Tarow men hate him like poison; they have sworn to send a ball after him; and he always rides alone, and at night."

"It is useless to warn him," said Anthony. "Be reasonable, Fritz," he called to his friend, who was coming out of the house; "do not ride alone—at least, not over the Tarow ground."

Fink shrugged his shoulders. "Ah! our young lady is here. We have not for a long time had the pleasure of seeing you, so that we find it very dull now."

"Listen to your friend's warning," answered Leonora, anxiously, "and be on your guard against these wicked men."

"To what purpose?" replied Fink. "There is no respectable danger now, and no one can guard themselves from a stupid devil who lurks behind a tree. That would put too much constraint on one."

"If you will not do it for your own sake, think of the anxiety of your friends," implored Leonora.

"Have I any friends still?" asked Fink, laughing, "sometimes I fancy they are all faithless. My good friends belong to that class who, true to duty, know how to console themselves. Here is our excellent Wohlfart, who would put his clean handkerchief in his pocket, and assume his most solemn countenance if my game was up, and any other of my fellow-comrades would still more easily be consoled. Come along with the horse," he cried out, leaped on it, and, with a short greeting, cantered off.

"He is riding direct to Tarow," said the forester, looking after him, and shaking his head. Leonora went silently back to her parents' room.

But late at night, long after the lights were extinguished in the castle, a curtain was still moving, and a woman listened anxiously in the hope of hearing the clatter of a horse's hoof returning home. Hour after hour passed. It was only towards morning that the window was closed, when a rider stopped at the door, humming a tune to himself, and took his horse to the stable. After a wakeful night, Leonora laid her aching head on the pillow.

Thus things went on for months. At last the baron, leaning on his daughter's arm, and supported by a stick, came down-stairs, and into the open air; and he would either sit in silence under the shade of the castle, or listen in bilious mood for any trifle which could give him an opportunity of scolding. In such hours the people preferred going a round-about way in order not to come near him, and as Anthony did not do so, he was frequently the victim on which the baron's ill-temper vented itself. Anthony's footing with the invalid soon became so intolerable, that only an extreme degree of patience enabled him to go on. Every day the baron heard the people excuse themselves, in answer to his cross-

questions, by saying, "Herr Wohlfart ordered it," or "Herr Rentmeister would not have it done," and he eagerly endeavoured to counteract Anthony's orders by his own. All the gall and bitterness that was in the heart of the unhappy man concentrated itself into a weak feeling of hatred against his agent.

Fink troubled himself very little about the baron. When he saw him quarrelling with Anthony, he frowned without speaking, or said at the utmost, "It could not be otherwise." Karl got on best with the baron; he never called him anything but captain, and knocked his heels together in military style whenever he had to report anything to him; the blind man heard it, and it cheered him. The first sign of interest that the baron showed for the welfare of others was bestowed on the bailiff. A garden-chair had been warped by the sun, and threatened to fall to pieces: Karl, in passing by, took hold of it, and knocked it together with his fist. "I hope you don't strike with your right hand, dear Sturm?" asked the baron.

"Just as it happens, captain," answered Karl.

"You ought not to do so," said the blind man. "Such a wound ought to be attended to. Often, after many years, it breaks out afresh, and that may be the case with yours later."

"A cheerful life and a happy death," answered Karl. "I am not anxious about the future."

"He is a very useful man," said the baron to his daughter.

The ears of corn had ceased growing, the green fields had assumed a tinge of yellow, the joyful bustle of the harvest began. When the first harvest waggon drove into the yard, Anthony was standing by the barn, watching its entrance. Leonora went up to him, and said, "How is the harvest?"

"As far as there will be any, it does not look bad—at least, Karl is content with the number of sheaves. It promises to be larger than we had expected," answered Anthony, looking pleased.

"So you have at least one pleasure, Wohlfart," said Leonora.

"It is a pleasure to all on the farm. You may see it in the boisterous activity of the people. Even the idle work with double vigour. But what gives me pleasure is your asking the question. You have grown a stranger to the farm and all that belongs to the estate."

"Not to you, my friend," said Leonora, casting her eyes down.

"You will be ill yourself," continued Anthony, anxiously. "If I might venture, I should like to scold you, for having thought so little of yourself all this time. Your pony has become stiff in the stable, and Karl is obliged to ride it sometimes, that it may not forget how to go."

"It may go like all the rest," exclaimed Leonora; "I shall ride him no more. Pity me, Wohlfart, I feel sometimes as if I had lost my senses; everything in the world has become indifferent to me."

"Why so cruel?" said a jesting voice behind her. Leonora shrank within herself, and turning round saw Fink, who had been absent for more than a week. He approached them. "Make haste and turn off Blasius," said he to Anthony, without taking further notice of Leonora; "the scoundrel is drunk again; he slashes the horses till the poor beasts are covered with wheals. I had a great mind to give the horses honourable satisfaction, and flog him before their eyes."

"Have patience till after the harvest; we cannot replace him now."

"Is he not generally a good-natured man?" asked Leonora, shyly.

"Good-natured is a comfortable title for everything that is bad," answered Fink. "With men it is called being good-natured, with

women, sensible." He looked at Leonora. "What has the poor beast the pony done, that you will not ride him any more?"

Leonora coloured. "Riding gives me a headache."

"Indeed!" said Fink, jestingly. "Formerly you were not so delicate. I cannot say that these lachrymose manners suit you; they will not take away your headache."

Leonora turned to Anthony, much hurt. "Are the newspapers come? I came to ask you for them for my father."

"The servant has taken them to the baroness's room."

Leonora turned with a bow, and went back to the castle. Fink looked after her, and said to Anthony, "Black does not suit her; she looks quite put out. It is one of those faces that only please when they are plump."

Anthony looked sternly at his friend. "Your conduct towards Fraulein Leonora for the last few weeks is so offensive that it has annoyed me very much. I don't know whether it is intentional, but you treat her with a want of consideration that hurts others besides her."

"That hurts you too, Master Wohlfart," said Fink, making large eyes at his angry friend. "I did not know that you were, also, this young lady's duenna."

"This language is of no use," answered Anthony, quieter. "I am right when I remind you, that you behave worse than rudely to an honest heart, which has now a double right to every consideration."

"Have the kindness to show her this consideration yourself, and not to disturb yourself about my ways," replied Fink, abruptly.

"Fritz," exclaimed Anthony, "I do not understand this conduct, it is true that you are inconsiderate"—

"Have you experienced that?" Fink interrupted him.

"No," replied Anthony, "whatever you may have been towards others, to me you have always shown yourself, what you are at heart, high-minded and sympathetic; but that is just the reason why it grieves me so much to see your manners so altered to Leonora."

"Then leave me alone," answered Fink, "every one has his own way of training birds. Only by the way I must tell you, if your Fraulein Leonora is not roused out of this unnatural life, all the best part of her will go ere long to the devil. The pony alone won't do it, that I know, neither will you, my son, do it, with your melancholy sympathy, and so we must let things run their course. I am going to-day to Rosmin, have you any commissions?"

This conversation brought on no estrangement between the friends; but it was not forgotten by Anthony. He was secretly provoked at the domineering manner of the other, and watched uneasily every accidental meeting between him and Leonora. Fink neither sought nor avoided her. The family evening meetings were not again resumed, not even when autumn came on. When Fink was at the castle, he dined with Anthony in his room, and only met Leonora in the open air; on these occasions she showed great constraint in her manner, and Fink treated her, after his conversation with Anthony, as a stranger.

Anthony had now to put to the test his own position in the family. Much as he avoided giving unpleasant information to the baron, there was one thing which he could no longer put off—the arrangements of the debts which his deceased son had incurred. For soon after his death, numerous letters arrived at the castle containing demands. Leonora had handed them over to Anthony, who had sent them to Justizrath Horn, and begged this honest man for his opinion, and for a more detailed

account of the transactions. This opinion had now arrived. The lawyer did not conceal from him, that the bond given by young Rothsattel to the packer, was so defective in form, that in law it would only have the value of acquittance for money received; there was no legal obligation on the baron to pay his son's debts; the amount of the debts was so great, that immediate payment was impossible. Anthony himself had lent the young spendthrift eight hundred thalers. As he drew out Eugene's bond from among his papers, he looked long at the handwriting of the deceased. That was the sum with which his vanity had bought him a position in the family. And what had this purchase brought him? Then, he had thought it an honour to help his distinguished friend out of a difficulty; now he perceived how rashly he had enabled the frivolous youth to obtain money. Gloomily he locked up the bond again in the drawer.

With a heavy heart, he sent to request an interview with the baron. At the very first mention of his son, he got into a state of violent agitation; and when Anthony, in his eagerness, called the deceased shortly, by his Christian name, the father's ire was excited. He interrupted Anthony indignantly; "I beg you will not call my deceased son by that familiar name; living or dead he should always to you be the Baron von Rothsattel."

Anthony mastering himself, answered; "Baron von Rothsattel, Herr Eugene during his life-time incurred debts of more than four thousand thalers."

"That is impossible," interposed the baron.

"The verified copies of the bonds and bills, as well as the examination of the original documents, which has been made on the demand of Justizrath Horn, make the fact itself indubitable. With regard to nineteen hundred thalers, which is the largest item, the truth of the full payment cannot be doubted; as the father of the bailiff Sturm, who lent the money, is a man of the highest integrity; a letter of the deceased to me acknowledges this debt expressly."

"So you have known of these debts," said the baron, in increasing anger, "and have kept them a secret from me? Is that your much-praised fidelity?"

In vain Anthony endeavoured to explain to him the details; the baron had lost all control over his feelings. "I have long known," he burst out, "how arbitrary your whole proceedings are; you take advantage of my condition, in order to obtain the command of my fortune; you make debts, and you allow others to make them. You raise money, and account to me for what you please."

"Say no more, my lord baron," said Anthony, decidedly. "Only pity for your helpless state prevents my giving you the answer you deserve. How great this sympathy is, you may judge, from my willingness to forget your words, and content myself with asking from you a declaration that you will acknowledge the debts contracted by the deceased; and will more especially give security to the packer Sturm, or to his son, your bailiff, by this acknowledgment. Will you do this, or not?"

"I will do nothing," exclaimed the baron, furiously, "that you ask with such arrogance."

"Then it is useless to speak any further to you now; but I beg of you, my lord baron, once more to take the matter into your consideration, before you make your last decision. I shall have the honour of receiving your answer this evening. I hope that in the meanwhile your sense of

justice will have overcome the ill-humour, of which I do not wish a second time to be the object."

With these words he left the baron, and heard how in his anger he knocked his chair down, and stumbled against the furniture. Hardly had he returned to his room, when the confidential servant appeared; and in his master's name asked for the papers and account-books, which Anthony had hitherto kept in his own room. Silently Anthony gave the papers to the frightened man.

He was dismissed—in the rudest way dismissed. His honesty had been doubted; this breach could never be repaired. The baron would very likely change his mind, and Anthony knew that in a few hours, the representations of the ladies would alter the opinion of the sick man; but for himself there could be no change, he must leave. Whatever duties he had undertaken, for the sake of the baroness and Leonora, his duty to himself now prevailed over every other. This was a bitter hour. As he was walking angrily up and down the room, he felt that the insult inflicted upon him, was at the same time a punishment. His intentions had been pure, and his conduct irreproachable; but the enthusiastic feelings which had brought him into this house, had not been of a nature to establish between him and the baron the proper relation between servant and master. It was not their own free will, nor a rational resolution that had united them; but the pressure of circumstances, and his own youthful enthusiasm. These things gave him claims, which were above his position; acted as a constraint upon others, and fettered and weakened himself.

In the middle of these reflections, he was interrupted by Leonora, who entered his room hastily. "My mother wishes to speak to you," she cried out; "what will you do, Wohlfart?"

"I must go," said Anthony, gravely. "I should never have thought it possible that I could abandon you in this situation, with your future so uncertain. Nothing could have induced me to leave this, before I could commit the management of the property to stronger hands; nothing but one thing, and that one thing has happened."

"Go!" cried Leonora, in a state of distraction. "Everything combines to crush us, there is no help; even you cannot save us. Go and free yourself from those who are sinking."

When Anthony entered the baroness's room, the sufferer was lying on the sofa. "Sit down by me, Herr Wohlfart," she said, in a low voice. "The hour is come when I must tell you what I have for my own sake kept for the time when people speak most openly to one another—I mean the hour of parting. The baron has been brought to such a state by his illness, that he has no longer the power of appreciating your faithful services. Your presence seems, indeed, even to aggravate daily his unhappy condition. In an ebullition of passion he has wounded your feelings so much that I think a reconciliation impossible. Your presence would now humble him—not in fancy, but in reality. We also should feel the sacrifice which you would make, henceforth, in staying here, as too great for us to be able to accept, even if you were willing to forget all."

"It is my intention to leave this place in a few days," answered Anthony.

"I cannot make amends for the wrong my husband has done you; but I wish to give you an opportunity of revenging yourself upon the baron, in a way which is worthy of you. The baron has attacked your honour; the revenge that I, his wife, offer you, is to endeavour to save his."

She had spoken calmly—the words glided from her lips like the conversation of general society; but now her voice faltered, and she had a difficulty in finding words. “Years ago, he gave his word of honour to fulfil an obligation, and in a moment of despair he broke his word. The proofs of his having done this are in the hands of low men, who may use their knowledge to ruin him. My ‘imparting this’ to you now is a proof of how I regard your conduct towards our family.” She took a letter from under her pillow. “With this letter I place his future fate, and that of all of us, in your hands. If any one can protect us from the use that his enemies may make of this weapon, it is you; if any one can restore peace to his distracted mind, it is you.” She stretched out her hand and gave Anthony the letter.

Anthony approached the window, and was surprised to see a letter from Ehrenthal. He was obliged to read it twice, before he could guess the meaning. It was written with a trembling hand, and a confused mind had guided the pen. In an accidental hour, when the mind of the dotard was tolerably clear, his relations with the baron had recurred to him. In his anxiety about his money, he reminded him about the stolen bonds; he demanded the money, and threatened him. In the midst of it, he complained of his own weakness, and the wickedness of other men. What the confused letter did not explain became clear by the copy of a bond—probably a rough draft, which Ehrenthal and the baron had made out together, for Ehrenthal mentioned in his letter that the original was in the handwriting of the baron, and that he would employ it against him.

Anthony folded up the letter, and said, “The threats which are founded on this paper need not disturb you, for there is no signature of the baron to the draft; and, confused as the letter is, Ehrenthal would not have forgotten the signature. The amount, also, for which the baron is liable on this single bond is trifling.”

“And do you think the letter speaks the truth?” asked the baroness.

“I believe it,” said Anthony. “This writing explains to me much which hitherto I have not understood.”

“I know that it contains the truth!” said the baroness, in so low a tone that her words scarcely reached Anthony’s ear. “How I have by degrees come to this conviction does not matter.” A faint colour spread over her cheeks.

“And now, Herr Wohlfart, will you undertake to get the stolen papers for us?” she asked, raising herself up.

“I will,” said Anthony, seriously; “but my hopes are small. The baron has not yet any right to the stolen bonds—they belong to Ehrenthal; and it is necessary, first of all, to come to an understanding with him which will be difficult; besides, I do not understand the exact state of the facts, and I fear I must trouble you to inform me of all you yourself know with regard to the theft.”

“I shall endeavour to write to you,” said the baroness. “Put down accurately, in distinct questions, what you wish to know, and I will answer them as well as I can. Whatever may be the result of your endeavours, I thank you for them beforehand, with my whole heart. Great as your exertions have been for our welfare, you can confer a greater kindness now. We can never pay the debt which we owe you. If the blessing of a dying woman can throw a kindly light on your future, take it on your way with you.”

Anthony rose.

“We shall never meet again,” said the invalid; “in this hour we

part. Fare you well, Wohlfart—I see you for the last time in this world!" She held out her hand to him; Anthony bent over it with great emotion, bowed, and left the room.

Indeed, she deserved to be called a noble lady. Her mind was noble, her judgment of others noble, and noble was the way in which she rewarded Anthony's services—most noble! In her eyes, he had always worn a powdered wig, and silver buckles at his knees.

Towards evening, Fink's step clattered along the passage; immediately after, he entered his friend's room. "Halloa, Anthony! what has happened in the house? John slides about as if he had broken the large porcelain vase; and when old Babette saw me, she wrung her hands."

"I must leave this house, my friend," said Anthony, gloomily; "I have had a painful scene with the baron to-day." He then related to him what had happened, and mentioned his conversation with the baroness, as far as he could without indiscretion, and concluded with these words, "Never was the condition of the family so desperate as now. They require twenty thousand thalers, ready money, in order to avert immediate ruin."

Fisk threw himself into a chair. "First of all, I hope you are not taking this affair too much to heart. With respect to what has occurred, we will waste no time talking of it; the baron is not a responsible being, and in confidence let me say the event does not surprise me. It was to be foreseen that something of this kind would happen. I have felt sure during the whole summer that you could not remain in this sentimental position with the family. It is equally clear that you are indispensable here as confessor to the ladies and confidential agent of the family; and I need not tell you that your sudden departure is a sad blow to me. And now let me ask you what you will do yourself?"

"I shall go as soon as possible to our capital," Anthony answered; "there I shall be employed for some months in the interests of the Rothsattels. My service connection with them is from this day broken. As soon as the baron's property is sold, I shall consider myself free from any moral obligations that I have entered into with this family."

"Good," said Fink; "that is all right. If you are to write another line for these people, it can only be as a free man, and from a feeling of sympathy. The next point is that Rothsattel, by his madness, has got into a crisis here also, for without you things cannot go on for a week on this property. Now the question is, Master Anthony, what is to be done here?"

"I have been thinking over it the whole day," answered Anthony; "I do not know. There is only one thing possible—that you should undertake that portion of the affairs which Karl cannot manage."

"Thank you," said Fink, "for your confidence, and, moreover, for your kind offer! To undertake the affairs of a fool who is not under restraint, would be indeed making a fool of oneself. Do not take it amiss when I say that you have been that good fool—I have no turn that way. After the first week, I should be in the unpleasant position of being obliged to ill-treat the man! Have you no other advice?"

"None!" exclaimed Anthony. "If you do not take charge of this property with all your powers, all we have done for years is lost, and our German colony falls to the ground. The estate will probably go to the collateral relations of the former possessor, who have the chief claims upon it; and old Polish mismanagement will begin again."

"Quite true," said Fink.

"And you, Fritz," continued Anthony, "and your money, have been

brought into this concern by your friendship for me. You also are in danger of suffering a heavy loss."

"True," said Fink; you speak like a book. You run away, and leave me with my troop among the Philistines. I tell you what, wait for me here, I will first say a few words to Leonora."

"What are you going to do?" exclaimed Anthony, holding him fast.

"Not to make any declaration of love," answered Fink, laughing; "rely upon that, my good fellow."

He rang for the servant, and begged for an interview with the *Fraulein* Leonora, in the drawing-room.

When Leonora entered with tearful eyes, she could with difficulty maintain her composure. He went civilly to meet her, and led her to the sofa.

"I refrain, on your account, from making any comment on what has passed to-day. Let us assume that our friend's presence in the capital is more desirable for your interests than his remaining here. From all I hear, this is in fact the case. Wohlfart will set out the day after to-morrow."

Leonora hid her face in her hands.

Fink continued, coolly: "Meanwhile my interests demand that things on this estate should be kept in a proper condition. I have spent some months here, and have a stake in this property. Therefore I beg you will convey a communication to your father, which I prefer at this moment making through you. I am ready to buy the estate from the baron on my own account."

Leonora started, and rose from her seat. "For the second time."

"Be so kind as to listen quietly to the end," continued Fink. "It is by no means my intention to play the part of a preserving angel to Baron von Rothsattel. I have not a pair of wings at my shoulders like our patient Anthony: and more especially to-day I am not disposed to make an offer to your father which might appear as if I neglected my own interest. Let us consider ourselves at this moment as opponents, and my proposal made, as it is, for my own interest. My offer is as follows: in order for the baron not to suffer a loss, this estate must sell for more than one hundred and sixty thousand thalers; but I can only offer you what in my opinion is the full value of the estate at present. I will take upon myself the encumbrances, and pay twenty thousand thalers to the baron within four-and-twenty hours; and the property is then to be given over to me. I wish to leave you in possession of the castle till next Easter, and would be glad to consider myself as your guest during that period, if it can be done without any inconvenience to either side. I shall generally be absent, and will be no burden to you."

Leonora looked anxiously in his face, which at this moment had a hard expression, like that of a tough Yankee; the little composure she had, vanished, and in a struggle of stormy feelings she burst into tears.

Fink quietly leant back in his chair, and without noticing her state of mind, continued: "You see I offer you a loss: what I take from you is probably half your inheritance: it is right that you should lose it. The baron has too rashly risked his fortune on this property: it is unavoidable that your family should pay for his want of foresight, for the purchase price of this property, in its present state, is not higher than my offer. I should be dishonourable if I were to conceal from you that the estate, if properly managed, may have doubled the value in a



few years; but I am firmly convinced that it will never reach this value under the direction of the baron. If Anthony had remained, it might have been possible for you to have obtained this advantage: now that hope is gone. Further, I will not conceal from you that Wohlfart has just requested me to take his place."

Leonora, in the midst of her sobbing, made a gesture of dissent.

"I am glad," continued Fink, "that we agree on this point. I have declined this proposal most positively, and for ever."

He ceased, and watched the girl before him, whose heart had been lacerated by his words. He spoke harshly to her—the man for whom she would have done anything, only to get a smile or a kind look. He had spoken with ill-concealed contempt of her father: his words were those of a cold egotist. And yet, after the harsh tone with which he spoke had died away in the room, it came over her that his offer would be a happiness for them in their helpless situation: and with the prophetic instinct of a loving heart, she guessed that his proposal had a deeper meaning than was quite apparent, but which, like a faint ray of hope, lightened the depth of her sorrow. Whatever he had feigned, there was no vulgar feeling expressed in his manner. The convulsive sobs turned into a flood of tears; she tried to rise from the sofa, but sank to the ground. Thus she lay by his chair, supporting her head on the arm, a picture of suffering resignation.

With streaming tears, she said, "You do not deceive me, do with us what you please."

A proud smile stole over the face of the man: he bent down to her, put his arm round her head, impressed a kiss upon her hair, and said, "My comrade, I wish you to be free."

Leonora's head rested on his breast: she continued weeping quietly. He held her in his arms.

At length he took her hand and shook it heartily. From this day we understand each other. You shall be free, Leonora—free with respect to me, and free from everything that might keep you here. You lose a man who has shown you the self-sacrificing affection of a brother; and I am not sorry that he is leaving you. I do not ask you to-day whether you will unite your existence with mine as my wife? For you are not yet free enough to decide according to your heart. Your pride must not say 'no,' but your 'yes' must not lessen your self-respect. When the curse is broken which lies upon your family, and when you are free to go or stay with me, then I will come for my answer. Till then, an honourable friendship, my comrade."

Leonora rose.

"And now we will think of nothing but our estate," said Fink, in an altered tone; "dry your tears, which I do not like to see in those fine eyes, and impart the official half of my proposal to the baron and your mother. I must beg for an answer to-morrow, about this time, if not sooner."

Leonora went to the door: there she stopped, turned towards him once more, and gave him her hand silently.

Slowly Fink returned to Anthony's room. He went up to his friend, who, with his arms crossed, was standing by the window, looking on the fields which lay before him in the faint moonlight.

"Do you remember, Anthony, what you told me of your patriotism, the first day of my arrival?"

"We have often spoke of it since that time," answered Anthony, sadly.

"I have borne it in mind," continued Fink; "this property shall not return again under the sceptre of Herr Bratzky. I shall buy the domain if the baron will consent."

Anthony turned round surprised. "And Leonora?"

"She shares the fate of her parents. We have just settled it."

He explained to his friend his proposal.

"Now I hope all will come right," exclaimed Anthony.

"We shall see," said Fink: "yonder there the sinner is burning in purgatory. I am glad that I do not hear his lamentations."

The following morning, at an early hour, the servant brought each of the friends a letter from the baron's room: they were in Leonora's handwriting; her father had signed them with trembling characters. In the letter to Anthony the baron had apologised, in carefully selected words, for having offended him, when in a state of morbid excitement, and expressed his gratitude for the faithful services rendered by him up to that day: in the letter to Fink he accepted his offer, and begged him to free him as soon as possible from the anxieties which, in his state of health, the management of the property must cause him. The friends exchanged notes silently.

"So it is decided," cried out Fink, "at last. I have roved over half the world, and had something to find fault with everywhere; and now I plant myself in this sand-pit, where it will be necessary every night to light a fire against the Polish wolves. But you also, Anthony, may raise your head and look before you, for if I have found a home now, you may go where the best part of your heart is. Therefore, my boy, let us once more talk over your instructions. Your first task is to find out certain stolen papers. Think also of the second. Do what you can to secure to the family the little they have preserved here. Endeavour to obtain from the old estate of the Rothsattels sufficient to cover the claims of all the mortgages. You ought to go, I do not ask you to remain here any longer now: but you know, that, under all circumstances, you will find a home wherever I live. And one thing more. I should be sorry to lose the bailiff: use your eloquence to persuade your faithful Sancho to remain here, at least over the winter."

"No one yet knows," answered Anthony, rising, "that I am going to quit this place; he must be the first to hear it."

The untidy room, in which once Herr Bratzky, the traitor, had lived, had under Karl's hands changed into a comfortable place, in which there was only one evil, that it was too full of all kinds of useful things. Karl himself had painted the room a beautiful pink, a picture of old Blucher hung against the wall in a gilt frame, and by its side was a great collection of implements, both for war and peace, rifles and powder, horns, saws, and axes, rulers and squares. At the window a little joiner's bench was placed, a number of robin red-breasts were fluttering about, and there was a strong smell of glue. Anthony had often rested here, and refreshed himself with Karl's cheery spirit, when, during the last few months, life had become a burden to him. When he now looked on the well-known walls, it fell heavily on his heart, that he must also part from this simple, faithful man. He leant against the bench, and said, "Put your accounts aside, Karl, and let us have a few serious words together."

"Now it comes," cried Karl, "there has been something going on for a long time: I see by your face that all the bombs are blown up."

"I am going away from here, my friend."

Karl let the pen drop out of his hand, and looked in mute astonishment, at the earnest face before him.

"Fink will take this estate, he bought it this morning."

"Hurrah!" cried out Karl. "If Herr von Fink is the man, all is right. I congratulate you with all my heart," he said, shaking Anthony's hand, "that things have taken this turn. In the spring I had other foolish thoughts. But now it is all right, and our farming is saved."

"I hope so too," said Anthony, agreeing with a smile.

"But you," continued Karl, and his countenance suddenly became serious.

"I am going back to our capital," answered Anthony; "there I have still some affairs to settle for the baron, then I shall seek a place in some office."

"And we have worked together a whole year," said Karl, sorrowfully, "you have had all the trouble, and another will reap the harvest."

"I go back to the place to which I belong. But, dear Karl, it is now a question of your future, not mine."

"I go with you of course," exclaimed Karl.

"I come to beg you not to do so. If we could set up together, I would do my best to keep you by my side, but that is impossible. I must seek for a place myself; I have never had a chance of gaining an independent position, a portion of the little that I had is gone; I do not go richer from here than I came. We should have to separate as soon as we returned home."

Karl sat with his head bent down, reflecting. "Herr Anthony," he said, "I hardly venture to talk to you about things of which I myself know nothing. You have sometimes told me that my old man is a rich fellow, who sits upon money-bags, what would you say," he continued, hesitating and working his chisel into the chair, "if what lies in the iron chest was not too little for you—you take it, and if it could be laid out in produce—it is really too bold of me; perhaps I could then be useful to you as a partner. It is only an idea, and you must not take it amiss."

Anthony, much touched, answered: "Look here, Karl, this proposal is just like your unselfishness, but it would be wrong for me to accept it. The money belongs to your father, and even if he were to give his consent, and I believe he would, it would make your own future more insecure than it now is. At all events your father's fortune will furnish you, in the vocation with which you are familiar, a happier life than you could enjoy in any other, in which, from love for me, you would have to work as a beginner. Therefore, it is better for you, my friend, that we should part."

Karl took out his pocket-handkerchief, and cleared his throat vigorously, before he continued: "And you will not employ the gold for yourself? you would give us good interest."

"It is impossible," answered Anthony.

"Then I will go to my old man, and stick my head in a haystack in my own country," burst out Karl, angrily.

"That you must not do," said Anthony. "You know more of this property than any one else; it would be wrong for this knowledge to be lost. Fink wants a man just like you, the farm cannot get on without you, till next summer. When we came into this country, we did not come to do good to ourselves, but to do our duty. My work is at an end, you are in the middle of yours. You do injustice to yourself and to your work, if you leave now." Karl hung his head again.

"What made me sometimes sorry for your stay here, was the small pay the estate could give, that will change now."

"Don't speak of that," said Karl, proudly.

"It is necessary to speak of it," said Anthony, "for a man is wrong who employs his best energies on that which does not remunerate him as his industry deserves. It creates an unsound condition, and men are in danger of becoming unsteady. You may be sure that I am right. So I beg you to remain here till next summer at least, then the farm will have increased to such an extent that an experienced inspector may replace you."

"And then," asked Karl, "am I to go to—"

"Fink will always wish to retain you; but if you wish to go, Karl, think of what we have often discussed during this last year. You have been accustomed to life amongst strangers, you have all the qualities of a settler on new ground. If a greater duty does not drive you away, your lot is to remain here as one of us, but if you leave this estate, buy a property in a foreign land. It will not be an easy life for you, and you will be deprived of many comforts, but we do not live in times when a clever man ought to sit idly at home and reap his fields comfortably. You have a brave heart, and are not accustomed to lazy enjoyments, but to active exertion. Here, with the plough in your hand, you will still be a German soldier, who will push the boundary stone of our language and customs further amongst the enemy." He pointed with his hand to the East.

Karl gave his hand to his friend, and said, "I remain."

When Anthony left the bailiff's house, Leonora stood before the door. "I have been waiting for you," she exclaimed to Anthony, hastily. "Come with me, Wohlfart; as long as you are still here, you belong to me!"

"If your words were not so kind," answered Anthony, "I should believe that you were secretly glad to get rid of me. For, dear Fraulein, I have not for a long time seen you in such good spirits. You meet me with your head erect, with bright colour in your cheeks, and your black dress also has disappeared."

"This is the dress I wore when we drove together in the sledge; you were pleased with it then. I am vain," she said with a sad smile, "and I wish that the last impression I leave on your mind should be a cheerful one. Anthony, friend of my youth, what a strange destiny, that we must part on the very first day that I have passed, for a long time, free from sorrow. The estate is sold, to-day I breathe again. What a life it has been, these last few years, always tormented, oppressed, and humbled, by friends and enemies—it was fearful—always in debt, either in money or thanks, not with respect to you, Wohlfart. You were the friend of my youth, and if you were in misfortune or in need, I should be happy if you would come and say, 'Now I want you, now come to me, wild Leonora!' I will not be wild any longer, I will think of all you have said to me." Thus she went on talking in her agitation, and her eyes were beaming. She hung upon his arm, as she had never done before, and took him all over the farm-yard. "Come, Wohlfart, for the last walk over the farm, which was ours!—this cow we bought together," she cried. "You asked me my opinion of the purchase, and it gave me pleasure."

Anthony nodded. "We neither of us knew exactly how to decide, but Karl settled it for us."

"Why! You paid the money and I gave the first hay, consequently,

it belongs to us both. Look once more at the black calf; it is quite charming. Herr Sturm threatened that he would paint its ears red, that it might look like a little devil. "She knelt down by the calf, embraced and stroked it; suddenly she rose and exclaimed, "I do not know why I coax it, it is no longer mine, it belongs to another." But through her anger there sounded a little roguishness. She drew him on. "Come to the pony, she said; "my poor little beast, it has become old since the day when I rode it after you in the garden."

Anthony caressed the animal, and the pony turned its head, now to him, and now to Leonora.

"Do you know how it happened that I met you on the pony?" asked Leonora. "It was no accident, I had seen you sitting underneath the bush—to-day I may say it—and I thought, faith! that is a nice youth; we'll have a look at him. That was the way it happened."

"Yes," said Anthony, "then came the strawberries, and then the lake. I stood before you and stuffed the strawberries down, and was rather lachrymose; but with all that, my heart was full of delight at you, you stood before me so beautiful and majestic. I see you now, with your floating dress, and short sleeves, and the golden bracelet on your white arm."

"Where is the bracelet gone?" asked Leonora, gravely, and leant her head on the neck of the pony. "You sold it, you wicked Wohlfart." The tears rolled from her cheeks, and she put both her hands across the pony to take her friend's hand. "Anthony, we could not remain children." Then she stroked his cheek with her hand, and cried out, "Friend of my heart, fare you well; adieu to my girlish dreams, adieu to the gay spring-time. I must now learn to go through the world without my guardian. You shall not be ashamed of me," she said, more calmly; "I will always be reasonable. I will also keep house well. To-morrow I will begin, I will go to Babette in the kitchen, I know that will give you pleasure. I will be economical, and will again make the book with three long lines on every page, and I will put everything down. We shall need economy even in small things, Wohlfart. Ah, my poor mother!" She wrung her hands, and again looked very sorrowful.

"Come out into the open air," said Anthony, imploringly; "we will go to the wood if you like."

"Not to the wood, not to the forester's lodge," said Leonora, gravely; "but I will go with you to the new farm."

Thus they wandered together over the fields. "You must lead me to-day," said Leonora.

"Leonora, you will make the parting very hard to me."

"Will it be hard to you?" asked Leonora, delighted, but immediately after she shook her head. "No, Wohlfart, it is not so; you have often secretly wished that you were far from me."

Anthony looked at her surprised.

"I know it," she said confidentially, and pressed his arm gently. "I know it right well. Often when we were together your heart was not with me. Often, yes, even that time when we were in the sledge, and many more times, you were thinking of her, who was away. When certain letters came, you were in haste to read them. What is the name of the gentleman?" she asked.

"Bauman," answered Anthony, innocently.

"Caught!" cried out Leonora, pressing his arm again. "Do you know, it made me very unhappy for a long time, I was a foolish

child. We are become wiser, Wohlfart; we are now free people, and therefore can walk arm-in-arm with one another. Oh, you dear friend!"

When they arrived at the new farm, Leonora said to the bailiff's wife, "He is going to leave us. He has told me that the nosegay you gathered for him, was the first pleasant thing that happened to him on arriving at the property. Give him now the last. I myself have no flowers, they do not thrive under my care. All that the place could boast of garden flowers, have bloomed here behind the barn."

The bailiff's wife again tied up a little nosegay, and handed it to Anthony with a curtsey, and said, sorrowfully, "It is exactly the same as it was a year ago."

"But he is going," cried out Leonora, turning away and pressing her handkerchief to her eyes.

Anthony shook hands heartily with the bailiff and the shepherd. "Keep a kind remembrance of me, my good people."

"You have always shown us kindness," cried out the wife of the bailiff.

"And consideration, and, above all, regularity," said the shepherd taking off his hat, "and provided food for men and beasts."

"You will all be taken care of," said Anthony; "you will have a master who can do more than I." Then Anthony kissed the curly-headed boy, make him fetch his savings-box, which was in the cupboard, and put a keepsake into it. The child held him fast by the coat, and would not let him go.

On their way back, Anthony said, "If anything can alleviate this parting to me, it is the future prospect of this estate. And I have a hopeful presentiment that your life too will be happy and freed from uncertainty."

Leonora walked silently by his side; at length she asked, "May I speak to you about the man who is now master of this estate? I wish to know how you became his friend?"

"I became his friend because I would not put up with an injury that he had done me; and our friendship has remained so firm because I have given up to him in all trifles, and maintained my own opinion firmly in all matters of importance. He respects energy of character and self-reliance, but becomes hard whenever he meets with weakness of judgment and will."

"How could a wife show firmness towards such a character?" said Leonora, downcast.

"Yes," answered Anthony, thoughtfully, "it will be very difficult for a woman who is passionately attached to him. He will break down all that looks like pride and wilfulness, with harsh severity, and will not be sparing when victorious. But where he meets with a dignified and composed mind, he will honour it; and if I should ever be in the position of giving advice to his future wife, I should tell her to avoid, with him, all that is considered bold and forward in woman. What renders a stranger agreeable to him, because it places him at once on a familiar footing, is just what he would least wish for in his wife."

Leonora clung faster to his arm and bent her head. They both returned silent to the castle.

In the afternoon, Anthony walked once more with Karl through the fields and wood. He had always considered his life in this place as a residence in a foreign country; but now when he was to part from it, everything appeared to him as familiar as if it were his home. Every-

where he found something of which he had taken care in the course of the year; in the fields, houses, beasts, and implements, he left the result of his work. He had bought the wheat which was growing on that spot, he had procured the new ploughs with which the ploughmen—whom he had engaged—were ploughing. There he had thatched a roof, here he had mended a broken bridge. And like all who come to a new employment, he had delighted in forming plans with his new-gained knowledge; over every part of the estate hovered hopes, plans, and promising projects. He had continually regretted that he was so little prepared for the work he had so suddenly undertaken; it was only now that he was going to give it up, that he was aware how much he liked it. He sat for an hour in the forester's lodge with that honest old man. Outside, autumn began to scatter the leaves from the trees, and deprive nature of her bright green; but here, round the old man, the forest still continued green, and the brave man of the forest sat opposite to Anthony, in the full vigour of his old age. When they parted at the door, the forester said, "When you first laid your hand on this door, I did not think the trees over our head would continue to stand so firm, and that I should begin to live again with other men. You have made death hard to an old man."

The hour of parting came. Anthony went to the baron's room, and took a short and formal leave of him. Leonora was all tenderness to him, and Fink like an affectionate brother. When Anthony was standing by his side, and looking with emotion on Leonora, Fink said, "Be calm, my friend; here at least I will endeavour to be like you." Fink and Leonora accompanied him to the carriage. Anthony cast one more glance on the castle, which on this grey autumn day looked as gloomy on the bare plain as the day when he first came there; then he sprang into the carriage, a last shaking of hands, and farewell; Karl seized the reins, they turned by the barn into the village, the castle had disappeared. The row of bad houses, the bridge over the brook, and the forest, all that he saw for the last time for a long period. At the end of the forest, at the boundary of the estate, where the road turns off to Kunau and Neudorf, Karl stopped. A group of men stood by the boundary stone. They were the people of the estate—the forester, the bailiff, and the shepherd, besides the smith from Kunau, the son of the constable of Neudorf, and some neighbours. With glad surprise Anthony jumped out of the carriage and greeted once more his companions.

"My father sends me to bid you farewell," said the constable's son. "His wounds are healing, but he is not yet able to go out of his room."

The smith from Kunau called out a last farewell, and added, "Greet our country-people yonder in Germany, and tell them not to forget us."

Silently, as on the day of his arrival, Anthony drove with his faithful companion along the high road. He was free now, free from the spell that had allured him here, free from many a prejudice, but free, like the bird in the air. He had worked restlessly for a whole year, and had now disengaged himself from all that had occupied him here; he had abandoned the straight line of his life, in order to work for others; and now he went to seek new work for himself, he must begin afresh. Whether he had strengthened or weakened his future prospects during this year was now the question. He had learnt the great value of a safe, steady, and regular life of self-dependent activity; and he felt now that he was further from this aim than a year ago. He perceived that he had risked his own powers on a bold game, and the thought fell like a cloud on the mirror in which he beheld the images of his past life. But he did not repent what he had done. He had had losses, but he had gained some.

thing; he had established a new life upon a bare plain; he had founded a new colony of his nation; he had opened the way to a happy future for men whom he loved; he felt that he himself had grown more mature, more experienced, and calmer; and so he looked over the heads of the horses that took him to his home, and said to himself, "Forward! I am free, and my way is now clear."

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## CHAPTER VII.

MEANWHILE Anthony's household spirit, the yellow cat, sat sorrowfully on her pedestal. A year full of noise and tumult had passed, and the cat was not aware of it. With her head bent, she looked about the empty room—the blinds were down, and no sunbeam lighted on her little ears. Nothing stirred in the room but the dust, which penetrating through the window-frames, whirled for a while round her, and at last settled down wearily on her plaster coat, on the writing-desk, and on the carpet. It was a bad year for the cat, and she would have sunk under her solitude, her sly eyes and smooth coat would never more have been recognized under the dingy covering of dust, if a friendly visitor had not from time to time come to her assistance. On a still evening the light of a wandering lamp gilded the cat's whiskers, a soft hand passed coaxingly over her back, the window of the room was opened for a quarter of an hour, the light of the moon penetrated into the room, and sponges and housemaids' brooms moved quickly over the floor; then the cat purred a little, but immediately afterwards her loneliness fell heavy on her heart, and she sank again into her motionless torpor.

It is a fresh moonlight night: all is asleep in the house, in all the rooms the men are gone to repose—all is asleep, and no one thinks that he is on the way home—he, who was already a child of the Firm when his old father, in his velvet cap, held him on his knee. Nobody in the house thinks of it, and who knows if many wish it? But the great house knows it, and in the night, life rises in every corner—it crackles in the timbers, it hums in the gallery, and it stirs gently in every partition; the moon spreads its faint rays over all the passages, and a dim light trembles in the most secret corners.

Whoever saw the yellow cat this night would wonder. She is licking herself, and smoothing herself; she stretches her stiff legs, and raises her tail joyfully; at length she jumps down from the writing-table, and out of the door into the yard. Solemnly she walks through all the passages and corners of the house; wherever she comes life arises, and all the little rabble of house spirits which are sure to exist in such a building, bestir themselves, and rush about excited. Grey, shadowy little manikins glide out of the stoves and from under the desks of the offices; they sweep the stairs and the passages, and move round old Pluto, who keeps watch by the sleeping servant, so that the great dog cannot sleep, but snorting, and with a low growl, looks at the labours of the good little people.

The cat passes by Sabine's room, and mews gently, unheard by anybody; but the hobgoblin who dwells in the globe of Sabine's lamp does not come out; he shakes his head and mutters, "We will not rejoice;" and in the merchant's room there is no good will to celebrate the arrival of the absent one—nay, the mysterious people who dwell there are proud,



and abuse the cat through the keyhole. But the cat does not disturb herself, nor do the rest of the house. On the great balance, too, a numerous jolly company are sitting; all the other hobgoblins of the house—and there are many such folk in this industrious place—are assembled to-night for a great festivity; and in the middle sits the cat, purring, and shining, and licking her feet with delight; and the most jolly fellows of the society climb up to the beam of the balance, and make faces at the door of the Principal—nay, even at their darling Sabine. Nobody knows that he is come back; but the house knows it, and it adorns itself, and opens its doors to receive the returning friend.

It is the evening of the next day: Sabine is standing in her treasury before the open cupboards; she is arranging the new linen, and again ties pink tickets round the table napkins. Of course she knows nothing, guesses nothing. Her white damask is shining to-night like silver and satin; the cut-glass cover of the old family drinking-cup gives a merry sound like a bell, and the vibrations tremble long in the large wooden cupboard. All the portraits painted on her china cups look bright and merry. Dr. Martin Luther, and the necromancer Faust, make faces and laugh; even Goethe smiles; and it is impossible to say how much old Fritz is laughing. Every shelf of the cupboard is shining and glittering, the old glass cup feels a secret twitching and tingling; Sabine alone perceives nothing; the wise mistress of the house does not know what all the little ones do. Or has she a presentiment? Hark! she sings; for a long time no merry song has issued from her lips; but to-day her heart is light, and while she looks at the bright array of glass and silver ranged before her in the cupboard, somewhat of its gay lustre falls upon her soul, and gently, like the notes of the wood-bird, a song of her childhood sounds through the small room. Suddenly she steps from the cupboard towards the window by which the portrait of her mother hangs over the arm-chair, and she looks gaily at the picture, and sings to her mother the same child's song that her mother had once sung in the arm-chair to the little Sabine.

A wrapt-up figure is gliding into the hall. Balbus, who now rules over the circle of the great balance, is standing in the open warehouse: he casts a slight glance on the figure, and thinks, with surprise, that it looks a little like Anthony. The servants are nailing up a box; the eldest of them turns accidentally round, and sees a shadow thrown upon the wall by the light of the lamp, and pauses for an instant in his hammering, and says, "One could almost imagine it to be Herr Wohlfart." In the yard behind, one hears a loud barking and the jumping of a dog, and Pluto runs wildly to the servants, wags his tail, barks, and licks their hands, and tells them, in his way, the whole story; but the servants know nothing, and one of them says, "It was a ghost, for it is no longer to be seen."

The door of Sabine's room opens. "Is it you, Franz?" asked Sabine, breaking off in her song. No one answers. She turns round, and gazes in anxious suspense at the figure standing at the door. Her hand trembles, and grasps the arm of the chair; she supports herself, and he hastens up to her, and in his emotion, without knowing what he does, he kneels down by the chair into which she has sunk, and lays his head upon her hand.

It was Anthony. Neither of them spoke a word. Sabine looked down on the kneeling one as on a delightful apparition, and laid her other hand gently on his shoulder. In the room it is still glittering and tinkling, and the lamp throws a bright light upon the two children of

the Firm, and the mother's picture over the arm-chair looked kindly down upon the group.

She did not ask why he came, nor whether he was free from the spell that had taken him away. As he knelt before her, and she looked into his clear eye, which anxiously and tenderly sought hers, she understood that he had returned to the house, to her brother, and to her.

"You have been so long abroad," said she, complainingly, but with a happy smile on her face.

"I was always here," cried Anthony, passionately. "Even in the hour that I parted from these walls, I knew that I gave up peace and happiness. Now I am irresistibly drawn to you, and I must tell you what I feel. I worshipped you like a holy image whilst I lived near you, and the thought of you was my protection in a foreign country. It supported me in solitude, in the midst of a troubled life, and in great temptation. Your figure stepped between me and another, and rescued me. I often saw your eye resting upon me, as it did when I asked you for help against myself, your hand was raised, it beckoned and warned me from the danger which fascinated me. If I am not lost, I have to thank you for it, Sabine."

Again he bent over her hand. Sabine took his, and whispered, "My friend, my dear friend! we have both experienced the same; we have dreamt, and struggled with our feelings, and we have both conquered. How much you must have suffered, my friend!"

"No," exclaimed Anthony, "it was not the same suffering, nor the same self-control. I have seen, and admired you in that hour, when you, with quiet composure, trusted to yourself. I was a weak and vain man, and I do not know what I should have come to, if the recollection of you had not lived in my heart. In distance, the power that you exercised over me became greater, and it was only by thinking of you that I became free."

"How do you know that it was not the same with me?" asked Sabine, looking tenderly at him.

"Sabine!" exclaimed Anthony, transported.

"Yes, there is your honest face," she cried, "but alas! I find in your features the trace of that iron time." She rose. "We have heard of your heroic deeds, though during the whole long year, we have had nothing from you but short greetings."

"Could I do otherwise?" interposed Anthony, eagerly.

Sabine nodded assent. "How I have listened to every account that came to us through your confidant. When, within these secure walls, I thought of the friend who was living far away among bitter enemies, exposed to the attacks of furious men.—Wohlfart, Wohlfart, I rejoice to see you again."

"Another has now the property, and the care of the helpless," said Anthony

"It is by a dispensation of providence that it has so happened," cried Sabine, looking with affection and pleasure at the recovered one.

In the uniform life of the house, she had for years nourished a deep affection for Anthony. Since he had gone from her, she had learnt how much she loved him, and with silent resignation had again locked up her sorrow within her heart. Neither her love nor her resignation had become visible in this regular house. Scarcely had she betrayed, either by look or gesture, what was passing within her, as became a child of the Firm, in which the Debit and Credit of men was booked punctually, without any sympathy. But now, in the delight of

seeing him again, the blossoms of passion burst through her self-control. She stood beaming with joy before him, and thought of nothing but the happiness of having him again, and in her joy she did not remark that another feeling was quivering in Anthony's pale face. He had found her again, but only to lose her for ever.

Sabine still held his hand, and led him through the glass corridor across the hall, to her brother's room.

"What are you doing, Sabine? This is a good house, but it is not one where poetical feelings are indulged in, or the soul easily touched, nor does it open its arms and press to its heart the wanderer who would fain return to it. It is a sober and prosaic house! Demands and refusals are here given in few words. It is a proud and rigorous house! Consider well! it will be no tender welcome to which you are leading your friend."

And Sabine felt it, and her foot tarried at the door for a moment before she opened it, but she took her resolution quickly, and, still holding Anthony's hand, led him across the threshold, and with a happy face, exclaimed to her brother, "He is here, he comes back to us!"

The merchant rose from his writing-table, but continued standing there, and his first words, spoken in a tone of calm, cold command, were, "Let go my sister's hand, Herr Wohlfart."

Sabine drew back, Anthony stood alone in the middle of the room, and looked aghast at the merchant. His powerful form had become aged within the last year, his hair grey, and his face more deeply furrowed. It could be no slight struggle which had so altered him. "My coming here, notwithstanding the danger of being unwelcome to you," said Anthony, "will show you how great was my desire to see you and the Firm again. If I have displeased you, do not let me feel it in this hour."

The merchant turned to his sister. "Leave us, Sabine; what I have to settle with Herr Wohlfart, I wish to say without witnesses." Sabine walked hastily up to her brother, and stood erect before him. She did not utter a word, but she met his frowning countenance with a clear glance, that spoke of firm determination, and then left the room. The merchant looked gloomily after her, and then turned to Anthony.

"What brings you back to us, Wohlfart?" he asked. "Have you not realized in the country the dreams of your youthful ardour, and do you now come to a citizen's house to find that happiness which you thought too slight for your pretensions? I hear that your friend Fink has settled on the baron's property. Does he send you back to our house because you were in his way?"

Anthony's brow became clouded. "I do not appear before you as an adventurer in search of fortune. You are unjust in expressing such a suspicion, and it does not become me to suffer it. There was a time when you judged me more kindly; of that time I thought when I came here. I think of it still, and pardon your offensive words."

"You once told me," continued the merchant, "that you considered my Firm and this house as your home, and you had a home, Wohlfart, in our hearts, as well as in the business. In a moment of frivolous excitement, you gave us up, and sorrowfully, and with a heavy heart, we have done the same by you. Why do you return? you cannot be a stranger to us, for we have loved you, and I am personally deeply indebted to you. You can no longer be the friend of former times, for you have torn asunder the ties which bound you to us. Just when I

least expected it, you reminded me that it was nothing but a simple business contract that kept you in my office. What do you seek now? Do you ask for a place again in my office, or do you, as it would appear, ask still more?"

"I ask nothing but reconciliation with you," exclaimed Anthony, overpowered with his feelings. "I ask for no place in your office, nor for anything else. In the hour when I left the baron's estate, I did so in the firm conviction that the first step for me to take was to go to you, and the next to find occupation somewhere else. Whatever I have lost in the course of this year, I have not lost self-respect; and if you had met me as kindly as my heart felt towards you, I should have told you, of my own accord, before an hour was over, what you have now compelled me to say. I know that I cannot remain here; I felt it already in that foreign country, whenever I thought of your house. Since I have entered these walls, and seen your sister again, I feel that I cannot remain here without acting dishonourably."

The merchant went to the window, and looked out silently into the dark night. When he turned round, the hardness had vanished from his countenance, and he looked with a searching eye at Anthony. "That was honourably spoken, Wohlfart," he said, at length, "and I trust honourably intended; and so I will frankly tell you, I am still sorry that you left us. I knew you as an elderly man rarely knows a younger one; you had advanced in the office under my eyes; I could rely upon the pureness of your feelings; I knew that no dishonourable thought ever found a place in your mind. Now, dear Wohlfart, you are become a stranger to me. Pardon my telling you so. Ill-regulated feelings allured you into relations which, from what I know of them, must have been unsatisfactory to all parties. In a country where conscience is often more accommodating than it is with us, and society less well regulated, you have had the management of a decaying fortune, and you have been the confidential agent of a bankrupt, who may have many good qualities, but who, having entered into dealings with unprincipled men, has lost what, in my business, is called honour. I presume that you have been too upright to do anything contrary to your sense of right; but, Wohlfart, I repeat again what I said to you before, any lasting occupation among weak and wicked men brings an honourable man into danger; gradually and without his perceiving it, he begins to tolerate what another, in a safer position, would reject; and imperious necessity compels him to agree in measures which, under other circumstances, he would at once have objected to. I am sure that you have remained what the world calls an honourable man of business; but the proud purity of your commercial honour—which, unhappily, many of our merchants now consider as pedantry—I do not know whether you have preserved that; and my being obliged to doubt this, and to tell you so, in this first hour of seeing you again, makes this meeting painful to me."

Anthony grew pale as the handkerchief he held in his hand, and his lips trembled as he answered, "Enough, Herr Schroeter! Your having said to me, in this first hour, the bitterest things that could be said to an enemy, is a proof to me that I have done wrong in setting foot again in your house. Yes, you are right. During the whole time, the feeling has never left me that I was incurring the danger you speak of. During the whole of this year I have felt it the greatest possible misfortune that the business in which I was interested, would not allow me to esteem the man for whom I was working. But I can tell you, as proudly as yourself, that the purity of the man who withdraws timidly from temptation is worth

nothing; and if I have rescued anything, from a year full of mortifications and bitter feelings, it is the pride that I have been tried, and have no longer acted like a boy—from mere instinct and habit, but as a man—from principle. I have, in the course of this year, gained a confidence in myself which I had not before; and it is because I have learnt to respect myself that I tell you now I well understand your doubts; but that, as you have expressed them, I consider the tie as broken which, even in a foreign country, bound me to your house. I go, and never will I touch this threshold again! Fare you well, Herr Schroeter!"

Anthony turned to go; the merchant hastened after him, and laid his hand on Anthony's shoulder.

"Not so fast, Wohlfart," said the merchant, more softly; "the man who turned from me the stroke of the Polish sabre, shall not leave my house insulted and in anger."

"Do not remind either of us of the past—it is useless now. Not I, but you yourself, have introduced insult and anger into our first meeting; and you, not I, have destroyed what bound us together in former times."

"No, Wohlfart," said the merchant; "if I have wounded you more by my words than I intended, be indulgent to my grey hairs, and a heart which has for years been full of heavy cares, and also full of anxieties for you. We do not see each other again as when we parted; and when two men have something weighing on their hearts, it should be honourably expressed in the first hour of meeting, that they may clearly understand each other. If you were not so dear to me, I should probably have kept my doubts to myself, and been more civil in my greeting. But now I welcome you. Shake hands with me."

Anthony gave his hand to the merchant, and said, "Farewell."

But the merchant kept Anthony's hand fast in his, and said, smiling, "Gently! I will not let you go yet. Remember, it is your oldest friend who now asks you to remain," he continued, gravely, as Anthony still stood at the door.

"I will remain to-night, Herr Schroeter," said Anthony, with dignity.

The merchant led him to the sofa. "I have heard much of your adventures, and should like to have them more fully from your own mouth. And you, too, will take an interest in what has happened to us. We will have that first. He began to relate what had happened, since he went, in the business. It was no pleasant picture that he laid before Anthony; but his report banished from Anthony's heart some of the coldness which the Principal's harsh reception had engendered, for he felt by the merchant's words what confidence he accorded him. He mentioned many things which commercial men seldom impart to their friends—all the most important business—the small gains and great losses of the last year.

By degrees, peace and a glimpse of comfort returned; all the good spirits of the house which, during the conversation between the two men, had crept frightened into the mouse-holes, now put their heads bravely out, and those under the secret ledger began to be confidential to the others.

Unconsciously, Anthony resumed his interest in the business, and quickly went through all the transactions of the year; the colour came back to his cheeks, his eyes brightened again, and involuntarily he began to speak of the concerns of the firm as if he still belonged to it. Then the merchant again held out his hand to him, with a sad smile; Anthony grasped it heartily, and the reconciliation was completed.

"And now let us talk of yourself, dear Wohlfart," continued the merchant. "One day you began to give me information about your

exertions on behalf of the baron, which I then impatiently put on one side; now I beg of you to relate to me all you can."

Anthony related all that was not secret; the merchant listened attentively, even anxiously, to what Anthony told him of the baron's affairs and his own labours. Anthony spoke with reserve, for his pride secretly revolted against the cross-examination, but he acknowledged many things to the merchant, which put him into better spirits.

"Allow me now to speak of your future prospects," began the merchant, at length, rising from his chair. "After what you have told me, I will not ask you to pass the next few years in my office, however welcome your assistance would be to me just now. But I beg you will allow me to seek for a situation that will suit you. Let us try together, and hurry nothing. Meanwhile, you will remain some weeks with us. Your room is vacant—everything there is unchanged. From what I hear, you have still a duty to fulfil in the course of this month; you may, therefore, devote yourself to it; but, if you have time and inclination to help me in the office, your services will be very welcome. With respect to your relations with my house," he continued, more seriously, "I trust you entirely. It will be a satisfaction to me to prove this to you; therefore I make this proposal."

Anthony looked down, silently.

"I do not exact anything difficult from you. You know how things go on in our household—that one has generally to seek for opportunities to speak to one another. Both for Sabine's sake and yours, I wish that you should live together some weeks in the old way; and when the time comes—a quiet parting. I wish it for my sister's sake, Wohlfart," he continued frankly.

"Then," said Anthony, "I will remain."

All this time Sabine was moving uneasily about in her room, and listening to every sound in her brother's study. But, often as sad thoughts arose, to-day they did not linger. Again the fire crackled, and again she listened to every stroke of the clock; but to-night the fir-wood burnt merrily in the stove, and made an unusual noise; incessantly, little joy-rockets rushed out of the flame, and the sparks flew through the door of the stove into the middle of the room. She could not feel sad or anxious, for the clock again ticked into her thoughts, "He is come—he is here!"

The door opened, and the aunt entered hastily. "What do I hear?" she cried; "Is it possible? Franz maintains that Wohlfart is with your brother!"

"He is there," said Sabine, turning away.

"What kind of mysterious conduct is this?" proceeded the aunt, displeased. "Why does he not come here? And nothing is ready in his room! How can you stand so quietly, Sabine? I do not understand you!"

"I am waiting," said Sabine, gently; but she clasped one hand with the other—held her wrist firm, for her hand trembled.

Men's steps approached the room; the merchant entered, with Anthony, and called out, while still at the door, "Here is our guest." And after Anthony and the aunt had exchanged friendly greetings, the merchant said, "Herr Wohlfart will live with us some weeks, till he has found a situation such as I desire for him." The aunt was highly astonished when she heard this resolution, and Sabine made a clatter with the cups, in order to conceal her emotion. But neither of the ladies made any remark and the lively conversation of the supper-table concealed

the emotion that was thrilling through all. Each had many questions to ask, and much to relate, as the past year had been rich in great events for all. There was, indeed, some restraint visible in Anthony's manner when he spoke of his life abroad, of Fink, and of the German colony settled on the property. Sabine listened to him with her head bent; but the merchant became more and more cheerful, and when Anthony rose to go to his room, the kind smile of old was on the merchant's face; he shook Anthony heartily by the hand, and said, joking, "Good night; and mind what you dream this first night, for it is said, that such dreams are realized."

When Anthony was gone, the merchant drew his sister into the next room, which was dark; there he kissed her forehead, and whispered in her ear, "He has remained upright—I believe it now, with all my heart!" But when he returned with her to the lighted room, his eyes were filled with moisture; he began to tease the aunt about her secret passion for Wohlfart, so that the good lady at last clasped her hands, and cried out, "The man is quite out of his senses to-night!"

Weary and shaken, Anthony threw himself on the sofa. His future prospects seemed to him void of all joy, and the thought of the bitter trial he had gone through that evening, and of the secret struggle of the next few weeks, weighed heavily on his heart; and yet he fell into a peaceful slumber, and all was quiet again in the great patrician house. It was a sober old house, with many corners and some secret nooks. It was no place for burning enthusiasm or blazing passion; but it was a good house, too, and it safely sheltered whoever slept within its walls. And again the little spirits were busy that night; they rushed about in confusion, and chattered and laughed, and through every corner the news was hummed, that the child of the Firm had returned. And the yellow cat on its pedestal looked proudly down on the sleeping Anthony, raised solemnly her curled tail, and purred all the night long.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

THE following morning, Anthony hastened to Ehrenthal. He could not obtain a sight of the invalid, and the ladies received him with such an air of hostility, that he considered it useless to say anything to them about the object of his visit. The same day, he begged Justizrath Horn to inform Ehrenthal's solicitor, that twenty thousand thalers were ready to meet Ehrenthal's claims; and as for the other demands that Ehrenthal made, and for which he had no proofs, they must await the decision of the court. The creditor's solicitor refused to accept this payment, so Anthony had the necessary steps taken to compel Ehrenthal to take the money, and renounce all other claims.

Towards evening, Anthony put on an old office coat, and with hasty steps entered the house of Loebel Pinkus. Through the window he looked into the little tap-room. He found the worthy Pinkus behind the bar, and addressed to him a short business question: "Herr T. O. Schroeter desires to know whether Schmiei Tinkeles, of Brody, has arrived, or whether he is expected. He is wanted at the office, on a matter of business."

Pinkus answered, cautiously, that Tinkeles was not there at that time,

and he did not know that he was coming; he promised, however, to give the commission, if he should see the man.

A few days after, the servant opened Anthony's door, and Schmiei Tinkeles glided into the room. "Welcome, Tinkeles," called out Anthony, looking at him with a grave smile.

The dealer was surprised when he found himself in the presence of Anthony. A shade passed over his sly face, and his uneasiness was visible, in spite of the lively chattering with which he expressed his pleasure at seeing him again. "Good heavens! do I see you again? I have often inquired about you in Herr Schroeter's office, and never could learn where you were gone to. I always liked to deal with you. We have done many a good business together."

"And we have had many a good fight together, Tinkeles," interposed Anthony.

"It was a bad business," said Tinkeles, evasively. "Trade is looking down now—the grass is growing on the high-roads! It has been a bad time in the country; the soundest man did not know, when he went to bed, if he should have a leg to stand on the next morning."

"You have got through it, Tinkeles, however, and I presume times have not been so bad with you. Sit down; I have something to say to you."

"What is the use of sitting down?" said the Jew, suspiciously, on seeing Anthony bolt the door; "in matters of business one has no time to sit down. Pardon me, why do you bolt the door? There is no occasion for bolts when one is doing business; nobody will disturb us."

"I am going to speak to you in confidence," said Anthony, approaching the dealer. "You shall not suffer from it."

"Well, speak," said Tinkeles; "but leave the door open."

"Listen to me," began Anthony. "You recollect our last conversation when we met on the journey?"

"I recollect nothing," said the dealer, shaking his head, and looking uneasily at the door.

"You gave me good advice then, and when I wanted to learn more, you disappeared from the town."

"These are old stories," cried Tinkeles, growing still more uneasy. "I cannot now recollect; besides I have something to do in the market. I thought you wanted to speak to me on business."

"It is business on which we are speaking, and it may be a good one for you," said Anthony, emphatically. He went to his desk and took out a rouleau of money, which he laid before Tinkeles on the table. "These thalers will belong to whoever gives me the information I require."

Tinkeles gave a sly side-glance at the rouleau, and answered, "A hundred thalers are good; but I can give no information; I know nothing; I cannot remember anything. Whenever I see you, you begin upon these vexatious things," he added, angrily. "It brings me no good when I have to deal with you; I have never anything but trouble and sorrow from it."

Anthony went silently to his desk, and took out a second rouleau, which he laid near the first. "Two hundred thalers," he said, and took a piece of chalk and made four strokes round them. "That is for you, if you give me the information I wish." The eyes of the Galician were fixed greedily on the square. Anthony stood by, and pointed silently with his finger to it. There was a severe struggle in the dealer's mind; he glanced at Anthony, and twisted his face into an innocent smile, and



endeavoured to appear unconcerned, and looked about the room with indifference; but his eyes always fell again on Anthony's fore-finger, and on the white square on the table. Neither spoke, and the mute silence lasted some minutes; yet it was a lively—an eloquent discourse. The Galician's eyes grew brighter and brighter, and his movements became more restless; he shrugged his shoulders, raised his eyebrows, and seemed to strive vigorously to free himself from the charm that bound him. At last the temptation was too much for him; he put out his hand to take the rouleaus.

"First speak," said Anthony, holding his hand over the money.

"Be not so hard with me," said Tinkeles, beseechingly.

"Listen," said Anthony: "I shall not demand of you anything that an honest man could refuse another; I might, perhaps, have you examined before a law court, and obtain your confession without money; but I know of old what an aversion you have to a court—that is why I offer you money. If you understood any other language, you would tell me what you know, when I inform you that a family has been made wretched by your not telling me all before. But this language will be of no avail with you."

"No," said Tinkeles, honestly, "it would be of no avail. Let me see the money that you have laid there for me. Is it the full two hundred?" he continued, fixing his eyes intently on the rouleau. "It is good, I know—they are all right. Ask me what you wish."

"You told me," began Anthony, "that Itzig, Ehrenthal's former book-keeper, was working to ruin Baron von Rothsattel."

"Was it not as I told you?" asked Tinkeles.

"I have reason to assume that you told me the truth. You mentioned two men—who is the other?"

The dealer hesitated; Anthony laid hold of the rouleaus. "Let them lie there," entreated Tinkeles, with a movement of his hand. "The other's name is Hippus, as I have understood. He is an old man, and has been living for a long time at Loebel Pinkus's."

"Is he of the trade?" asked Anthony.

"He does not belong to our people, nor is he of the trade; he was baptized, and has been an attorney."

"Have you anything to do with Itzig in the way of business?" inquired Anthony, further.

"God preserve me from that man," exclaimed Tinkeles. "The first day when he came to town he wanted to break open the cupboard in which my things were, and I had great difficulty in preventing his taking my clothes. He would take the coat off my back. I will have nothing to do with such a man."

"So much the better for you," answered Anthony; "now attend to me. The baron has been robbed of a box in which papers of importance were placed. The theft was committed in Ehrenthal's office. Have you accidentally heard anything about it, or have you any suspicion who the thief is?"

The Galician looked uneasily about the room, at Anthony, and the rouleaus, and said at last, resolutely, "I know nothing."

"This is precisely what I wish to know from you, and this money is for whoever will give me the information."

"Well, if I must speak," said the Galician, "it may as well be said at once. I have heard that the man who is called Hippus, when he was drunk, shouted out and said, 'Now we have got the Red-tail, he is done for; the papers will do for him.'"

"And is that all you know?" asked Anthony, in a state of anxious suspense.

"All," said the Galician; "it is long ago, and I could only catch a little of what they were saying."

"You have not earned the money which lies there," replied Anthony, after a pause. "What you have told me is little. But to prove that it is important for me to obtain information from you, you may take the one hundred thalers; the second hundred will be yours as soon as you can help me to a trace of the stolen box or papers. Perhaps that may not be impossible."

"It is not possible," said the Galician, decidedly, weighing the rouleau in his hand, and looking at the other. "Whatever Itzig does, he does so that no other can look on his path, and I am a stranger in the place, and have no dealings with rogues."

"Nevertheless, you may try," answered Anthony. "As soon as you know anything, inform me of it. I shall keep this money for you. I need not tell you that you must be cautious, and avoid raising any suspicion in Itzig or his partner. Do not betray to anybody that you know me."

"I am no child," answered Tinkeles; "but I fear I shall be of no use to you in this matter."

The Galician withdrew, after having put the rouleau in the pocket of his caftan.

Anthony had learnt the name of the person who had probably committed the theft, and this name might enable him to make further investigations. But the difficulty of obtaining the lost documents without the help of a magistrate increased. Under these circumstances, he took a resolution which was more like a merchant than a magistrate. It was a bold step, but it offered the possibility of returning the papers into the hands of the baron in a short time, without further publicity. He resolved on entering into communication with Itzig himself, and to make as much use as possible of the little he had learnt from the Galician, with the unscrupulous hardened villain. He felt how uncertain the step was, and that he should have a hard struggle with Itzig. If he had known all that daring spirit was plotting, he would have had still more doubts about taking this line.

Itzig's cunning boy opened the door, and Anthony stood face to face with his schoolfellow. The agent knew that Anthony had returned from the baron's estate, and was prepared for this visit. For a moment the two men looked at each other. Each endeavoured to read the face and manner of his antagonist, and prepared for the encounter. To both, many years of cautious dealing with men, and the requirements of trade, had imparted a certain similarity. Both were accustomed to maintain an appearance of composure, in order to conceal the object they wished to obtain; both were accustomed to be rapid in their judgment, careful in their words, and cool in their manner; both showed in their conversation and behaviour, something of the form which mercantile intercourse gives to commercial men; both were to-day in an excitement which suffused Anthony's cheeks, and threw a bright glow over Veitel's face. Anthony's open countenance was met by the restless lurking look of his opponent, and the stern earnestness of his manner was met by a mixture of defiance and submissiveness. Each perceived at once that his opponent was dangerous, and that the victory would be hard to gain, and each gathered up his whole powers. The struggle began. Itzig opened it

in his way. "It is a pleasure to me to see you for once in my house, Herr Wohlfart," he said, with sudden cordiality. "It is long since I have had the happiness of meeting you; but I have always taken a great interest in you. We were at school together, we came here the same day, and have both made our way in the world. I was told that you were gone to America; people do report so many things. I hope that you are now come to stay in the town. Perhaps you will return to Herr Schroeter's office again. They say that he regretted much your departure." Thus the words dropped from his lips; but his look endeavoured to penetrate into Anthony's mind, to find out the intention of his visitor.

He had committed himself by pretending not to know where Anthony had been latterly. For by avoiding the name of Rothsattel he clearly showed that he had reasons for not wishing to mention that name.

Anthony profited by this error of Itzig's, and answered as coolly as if the whole speech of the other had been addressed to the air. "I come, Herr Itzig, in order to consult with you on a matter of business. You know the circumstances under which Baron Rothsattel's family estate is to be sold by auction."

"I know them in a general way," answered Veitel, leaning with an air of resolution against the corner of the sofa, "as one usually knows such things. I have heard a great deal about it."

"In Ehrenthal's office you managed his affairs with the baron, which went on for years, and concerned the financial position of the estate, and therefore, it may be presumed, that you have a perfect knowledge of them. As at present it is impossible to transact business with Ehrenthal, on account of his illness, I beg you to give me some information."

"Whatever I have learnt in Ehrenthal's office as bookkeeper," said Itzig, "is confidential, and I cannot impart it to anybody. I wonder you should ask me to do such a thing," he concluded, with a malicious glance.

Anthony answered coldly, "I ask for nothing which can hurt your feelings of duty. I wish to know in whose hands the mortgages lie which encumber the estate."

"That you may easily learn by an extract from the register of mortgages," said Veitel, with well-feigned indifference.

"Perhaps you have heard," continued Anthony, "that some of the mortgages have, during the last few months, passed from one hand to another; the present possessors are, at all events, not entered in the register. It is to be assumed that these documents have been bought, either to facilitate or retard the sale of the estate, by some person who wishes to become a purchaser."

Up to this point the conversation had only been a preparation for the more serious struggle, like the first moves in chess, or the beginning of a race, but Itzig's impatience made him take a leap forward.

"Are you commissioned to buy the estate?" he asked abruptly.

"Suppose I am," cried Anthony, "and wish to secure your co-operation, are you in a condition to obtain the information speedily, and will you undertake the necessary negotiations for the purchase of the mortgages?"

Itzig deliberated with himself. It was possible that Anthony came only for the purpose of securing the estate, at the public sale, for the baron, or his friend Fink. In that case he was in danger of seeing the

secret object of his long labours and dangerous deeds frustrated. If Fink helped the baron with his fortune, Itzig would lose the estate. Then he must take another way of extracting money from the baron. While he was considering all this, in a state of stormy agitation, he observed how scrutinizingly Anthony looked at him, and with the quickness of a bad conscience, concluded that Anthony guessed part of his plans, and that he wanted something more of him. Probably this demand was only an excuse. He hastened, therefore, with great volubility, to promise his co-operation, and expressed a hope that he might succeed, in due time, in finding the present holders of the mortgages.

Anthony saw that the rogue had understood him, and was on his guard. He altered the attack.

"Do you know one Hippius?" he asked, quickly, looking intently into his adversary's face.

For one moment Itzig's eyelids quivered, and a faint red again tinged his cheeks. Hesitating, and as if seeking for the name in his memory, he answered, "Yes, I know him; he is a ruined and good-for-nothing man."

Anthony perceived that he had hit the right point. "Perhaps you remember that, a year and a half ago, a small casket belonging to the baron, with papers and documents, was stolen from Ehrenthal's office, which were of great consequence to the baron?"

Itzig sat quiet—only his eyes moved uneasily about. No stranger would have observed this sign of a bad conscience; but Anthony saw in the altered countenance the old face of the Ostrau school-boy—the same face the boy Veitel had made when he was accused of having stolen a pen or a sheet of paper. Itzig knew then about those thefts, and he knew now about those papers.

At last he answered, with indifference, "I have heard about the casket; it was a short time before I left Ehrenthal's office."

"Well," proceeded Anthony, "the stolen papers can have no value to the thief; but there is good reason for supposing that they have passed into the hands of another person in this place."

"That is not impossible," answered Itzig; "but I do not think it likely that anybody would keep worthless paper so long."

"I know," continued Anthony, "that the papers exist. Indeed, I know that they are to be used, in order to obtain concessions from the baron in some way or other."

Itzig moved uneasily in his chair, and looked down; the spots on his cheeks became a deeper red, but he did not speak. Anthony also paused. The two sat opposite to each other in deep reflection. At last the silence became insupportable to the party attacked; he settled himself on his seat firmly, compelled himself to look his antagonist in the face, and asked him, with a hoarse voice, "Why do you mention this matter to me?"

"You shall not be left in doubt as to what I want. I know that the papers are not far off. I have reason to suppose that by your skill it will be possible to find out the person in whose hands they are: through that Hippius you will be able to obtain the necessary information."

"Why through him?" asked Itzig, hurriedly.

"He has, in the presence of witnesses, used expressions which lead to the positive conviction that he is accurately acquainted with the contents of those papers." Itzig clenched his teeth, and muttered something that was inaudible, but which, if put into distinct words, would have sounded like—"The drunken rascal!"

Anthony continued: "The baron has bought up the right that Ehrenthal had to the papers by depositing in the law court the sum named in them. The casket and its contents are the baron's property. If by your means the papers can be procured, and delivered into the hands of the baron, or his deputy, the baron—who cares less about the prosecution of the thief than for the recovery of the papers—will be ready to pay a sum of money to whoever obtains them."

This proposal, undoubtedly, had much that was attractive for Itzig; he had, during the whole time, felt oppressed by the crime; with increasing disgust, he had been obliged to put up with the partnership of the drunken Hippus. If now, the money of others came to the assistance of the baron, if he had to give up the hope of purchasing the estate for himself, the moment was come for restoring the fatal paper to the baron, in exchange for a handsome sum. But the proposed business was also dangerous, in case Anthony should think of prosecuting the thief after the delivery of the papers. Therefore he asked, "If the baron cares so much for the recovery of the casket, how did it happen that, when it disappeared, so little noise was made about it either by Ehrenthal or by the baron? I never heard that the police had been informed about it, nor that any inquiry had been made."

This insolence provoked Anthony, and he answered indignantly, "The theft was accompanied by circumstances which would have made the investigation painful to Ehrenthal; the casket disappeared from his closed office, and perhaps it was for this reason that a judicial inquiry was not entered into."

"If I remember right, Ehrenthal told his friends at the time that the inquiry was given up in consideration for the baron."

Anthony felt deeply this cut of the swindler's. He thought of Leonora, and the number of humiliations which the family had experienced during the last year, and could with difficulty maintain his composure while he said, "Perhaps the baron had other reasons at that time for letting the matter drop."

Now Veitel felt secure. From Anthony's suppressed anger, he knew how strongly he felt the necessity of saving the baron. His offer was made seriously; the baron was afraid of the thief. From this moment he recovered his self-possession, and his manner became so cold and confident, that Anthony discovered he had got the worst of it, and that his sly adversary was slipping through his fingers; for Itzig began immediately, "So far as I know Hippus, he is not to be relied on; he is often drunk. If in one of his drunken fits he has told you anything, I fear it would be of little use in getting you the papers. Has he given you any positive information upon which we could make him an offer?"

Now it was necessary for Anthony to be on his guard. "He has made a declaration before witnesses which makes it certain that he knows the papers, knows where to find them, and has the intention of making use of them in some manner."

"Perhaps that may be enough for the lawyers, but not enough for a man of business to treat with him," continued Veitel. "Do you know precisely what he said?"

Anthony parried the blow, and made a hit at his adversary, saying, "His communications are known exactly to me and to some other persons: they are the reason of my having called on you."

Itzig felt he must leave this dangerous subject. "What sum will the baron give to recover the papers? I mean," he said, correcting himself,

"is it an affair upon which it is worth spending much time or trouble? I have now many other things to do. You cannot expect that for a couple of louis-d'ors I should spend my time in seeking for what is so unimportant and so difficult to get hold of as papers which some one has hid."

Years ago, when these two, who now stood opposite to each other as enemies, walked together to the capital, it was the Jew boy who was seeking for papers on which, in his childish folly, he thought his future fortunes would depend. Then, he had been ready to buy the property for Anthony, and now, the other had come in search of secret documents, and claimed the baron's estate from him, and he had become the initiated one. He had found the mysterious receipt, and he held the baron's estate firmly in his hand for himself, and his fate approached its fulfilment. Both men thought, at the same moment, of the day of their common journey.

Anthony answered, "I have full powers to treat with you about the sum, but I must inform you that the matter is pressing. Therefore I require you, first of all, to declare whether you are inclined to deliver the papers to Baron von Rothsattel, and to help in the purchase of the mortgage on our account."

"I will make inquiries, and consider if I can serve you," answered Veitel, coldly.

In the same tone Anthony asked, "What time do you require to decide?"

"Three days," replied the agent.

"I can only give you four-and-twenty hours," answered Anthony, positively. "If, at the end of that time, I receive no answer, I shall proceed, on behalf of the baron, to take extreme measures to recover the papers, or to assure myself of their destruction; and I shall employ my knowledge of the theft, and actual hiding-place of the documents, to discover who committed the crime." He took his watch out and pointed to the dial, "To-morrow, at the same hour, I will come to receive your answer."

Thus ended the ominous interview.

When Anthony left the door, Itzig's resolution was taken. He cast another glance at the departing figure, a glance full of fear and hatred. His schoolfellow had become a dangerous enemy. Now, he knew how active Anthony was in the baron's interests. He had a dark idea, that Anthony's tie with the baron's family began on that day when the baron's daughter rowed him over the lake, and he was looking at them from the dusty road; he was inclined to imagine that Anthony was striving, in quite another way, for the possession of the same property. Thus, all the defiance of his selfish soul was aroused, and made him firm.

"Only another week," he muttered, "and I shall be betrothed to Rosalie. On that day I will find the bonds in some corner of Ehrental's office, and then the Rothsattel and his friends shall make their agreement upon such conditions as I shall grant them. By merely threatening to have the explanations made before a court, and the conduct of the baron made public amongst men of business, I will compel this Wohlfart to do whatever I please. Only a week! So long will I keep him waiting—and then I win."

At the end of the four-and-twenty hours, Anthony came to Itzig's lodgings, and found the door locked. He returned twice the same evening, nobody was at home to him. The following morning the cunning boy received him, and in answer to Anthony's inquiries, said, "Herr Itzig was gone on a journey; that he might return at any moment, but it was possible he might be absent for several days."

Anthony knew, from the fluent way the boy talked, that he was repeating a lesson.

From Itzig's door Anthony went to an official, who was considered the most active member of the detective police. He cautiously informed him of the most necessary facts regarding the casket and its contents, and begged for his advice. He mentioned his suspicions that the theft had been committed by the attorney, with the connivance of the agent Itzig; and did not conceal the imperfect warnings given by the honourable Tinkles. The officer listened with interest to Anthony's report, and said at length, "Amongst the insufficient materials with which you furnish me, the name of Hippus is the most important. He is a dangerous subject, whom I never have rightly been able to get hold of. He has often been punished for swindling and cheating, and is under the surveillance of the police. Over the other person you name, I have no control; and the evidence you give is so trifling, that an official pursuit of the matter seems hardly possible. Undoubtedly the theft, which is said to have been committed a year ago, has not yet been formally communicated to the magistrates."

"Do you advise me," asked Anthony, "considering what you know of that Hippus, to seek him out, and try and recover the lost documents as a matter of business?"

The officer said, shrugging his shoulders, "I cannot give you any such advice in my official position; and further, I fear that this step would not meet with any success, for if the suspected person has obtained them for the advantage of another, they will no longer be in his hands. And, in the first instance, we cannot presume that he will betray his accomplice."

"And it is quite out of your power, under these circumstances, to help me in the recovery of these documents?" asked Anthony.

"Before I can act, information must be laid of the theft, and the stolen property as accurately described as possible; until this is done, I cannot give you any direct help in your inquiries. But as the object of your pursuit is Herr Hippus, in whom I take a personal interest, I will do what I can for you. I will to-day pay him a domiciliary visit. I tell you beforehand, we shall find nothing; and I am ready to repeat this visit some days later, at the risk of losing my reputation in the eyes of the respectable Hippus; for the trick of frightening thieves by superficial visits, is one that may work with novices; but is of so little avail with an experienced hand, that he will only treat me with contempt. It is quite certain, also, that we shall find nothing on the second search."

"And what good can this measure do me then?" asked Anthony, with resignation.

"A greater than you imagine. As you have already taken the step of trying to make an arrangement with the agent Itzig, your work will be made easier by our intervention. For a domiciliary visit has in general the effect of causing uneasiness to those who are the subject of it; and though I am not sure how Hippus will take such a visit, yet I believe it will occasion, even in him, a certain degree of disquiet; this may assist your endeavours. Moreover, I will take care that the first visitation shall be done awkwardly, and with much noise. Happily, he has now a stationary dwelling; he has not been troubled by us for some time, and he has become bold. I also hear he has grown old and decrepid; all that may help you to catch the man one way or another."

This was all Anthony could obtain.

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## CHAPTER IX.

It was a dark evening of November, the fog was lying on the town, it filled the old streets and squares, and penetrated through the open doors into the houses. It rolled itself round the street lamps, the flame of which flickered in a red ball of vapour, and did not give light for more than two or three paces along the ground. It hovered over the river and hung about in thick masses. A host of grey figures, with long robes, moved over the black stream, over the old piles, and under the bridges, a ghostly band of venomous vapour. They rolled up the steps, clung to the wooden pillars of the balconies, and floated busily about in wild confusion. Sometimes there was a gap between the foggy figures, and then one could see down into the dark waters, which rushed by the abodes of men, like an unearthly stream of destruction.

The streets were empty. Here and there a figure was seen near a lamp, which quickly disappeared in the darkness. Amongst these misty creatures was a little decrepid man, who, with unsteady steps, tried to advance, and slipped from under the lamps as fast as his staggering legs would allow. He tottered through the hall, into the court where Itzig's office was, and looked up at the agent's windows. The blinds were drawn down, but a faint light penetrated through the windows. The little man tried to stand firm, stared at the light, raised up his clenched fist, and shook it threateningly. Then he ascended the stairs, and rang violently twice, three times. At last a light step was heard, the door was opened, the little man entered and ran through the ante-room, while Itzig locked the door behind him.

Veitel looked paler than usual, and his eye passed restlessly over the figure of his unseasonable visitor. Hippus had never been an attractive figure of manly beauty; to-night he looked frightful; his cheeks were hollow, a mixture of terror and defiance was expressed in his hideous face, and his eyes peered maliciously at his former scholar. Undoubtedly, he was drunk again; but a feverish terror had excited, and, for the moment, sobered him.

"They are on my heels," he burst out, moving his fingers convulsively in the air; "they are seeking me."

"Who are seeking you?" asked Itzig, although he knew perfectly well who were seeking him.

"The police, you rascal," screamed out the old man. "For your sake I have got into a mess. I cannot go home; you must hide me."

"We are not come to that yet," answered Veitel, with all the coolness he could command. "How do you know that the police are at your heels?"

"The children in the street talk of it," cried Hippus; "I heard it in the streets, when I was creeping into my hole. It was a mere accident that they did not find me in my room. They are standing by my house, and on the stairs; they are waiting till I return. You must hide me. I will have money, I will go over the frontier. There is no remaining here for me; you must help me away."

"Help you away!" replied Veitel, gloomily; "and where to?"

"There! where no police will overtake me. Over the frontier to America."

"And if I will not do it?" said Itzig, in a tone of deliberate malice.

"But you will do it, blockhead. You are not so green as not to know what I will do, if you do not help me out of this scrape, you good-for-



nothing! They will prick up their ears at the criminal court, at what I know of you."

"You will not be so wicked as to betray an old friend," said Itzig, in a tone which vainly aimed at being sentimental. "Look at the thing more calmly. After all, what danger is there if you are arrested? Who can bear evidence against you? They must set you free for want of evidence."

"Indeed," screamed out the old man venomously, "do you mean that I am to creep into a dungeon for your sake, for such a jack-pudding as you? That I am to live on bread and water, whilst you are here eating goose, and laughing at the old ass Hippus? I will not go into the dungeon; I will be off; and till I am off you shall hide me."

"You cannot stay here," answered Veitel, sullenly, "there is no security here for you or for me. Jacob will betray you, the people in the house will observe that you are here."

"It is your affair to hide me," said the old man; "but I desire you to get me away, or——"

"Hold your tongue," said Veitel, "and listen to me. If I should give you money and send you by railroad to Hamburg, and then over the water, still I cannot do it at once, and from my own house; you must be got away by night, to some small station on the railroad. I cannot hire a carriage for you, that would betray you; and in the state you are at present, you are too weak to walk. I must get you away by some accidental opportunity, which I must find. Meanwhile, I must take you to some place, which the police do not know that I frequent, for I fear they will seek you wherever I am. If you do not return home, they will, perhaps, seek you here this very night. I will go and look out for a conveyance, and for a place where you can stay. In the meantime you must remain in the back room till I return."

He opened the door, and Herr Hippus slipped in like a scared bat. Veitel wished to lock the door behind him, but the old creature squeezed his body into the doorway, and screamed with indignation. "I will not remain in the dark, like a rat. You must leave a lamp there; I will have a light, you Satan," he shrieked aloud.

"They will see from below that there is a light in the room, which will betray us," said Veitel.

"I will not sit in the dark," screamed the old man again.

With an oath Veitel seized the lamp and took it into the second room, and hastened into the street.

Cautiously he approached the house of Loebel Pinkus. All was quiet there; from the hall he looked through the little sliding window into the tap-room, where Pinkus and some of his guests were sitting together, in the carelessness of a good conscience. He glided up stairs to his former room, took some rusty keys from a secret corner, entered cautiously the common bedroom, and saw with satisfaction that it was not lighted, and was empty. He hastened to the balcony, there he stopped for an instant and looked at the rolling masses of fog and the dark river. The moment was favourable, it was high time to make use of it. For irregular puffs of wind came across the water, and already the night sky was disturbed, the dark clouds were rent, and flew scattered over the stream. In a short time the wind would clear the river, the outlines of the houses, and the lamps, which glittered like red points at the corners of the streets.

Itzig hastened to the end of the balcony, and put a key into the door which was at the head of the steps leading down to the water. The

door rattled as it flew open; he descended to the edge of the water, and examined the height of the river; the water was gurgling with a hollow sound, and broke against the last step of the staircase. The path which, running by the side of the houses along the low bank of the river, was generally visible during the whole year, was now flooded. But he had only to go a few paces in the water in order to reach the steps of the other house. Veitel looked fixedly at the river, and put his foot into the icy cold water, in order to feel how deep he must go to reach the ground. So anxious was he to rescue the old man, that he did not care for the cold; he did not even feel it. The water came up to his knee. He cast another glance on the house near him; all was darkness, vapour, and the silence of death—only the water and the wind murmured plaintively.

In the meantime, Hippus tried to make himself comfortable in the room in which he was locked up. After having cursed Veitel with many blasphemous oaths, and clenched his fists at him as he went, he turned his troubled mind to an inspection of the room; he reeled to a low cupboard, turned the key, and looked for some liquid to moisten his dry tongue and restore his sinking strength. He found a bottle of rum, poured its contents into a tumbler, and sipped it down with as much rapidity as the hot poison would allow. A cold perspiration immediately covered the forehead of the unhappy man; he took the remnant of a handkerchief out of his pocket, eagerly wiped his face, and with straddling and drunken steps and fast increasing courage, paced up and down the room, muttering aloud his disordered fancies.

"He is a scamp, a cowardly hare, a miserable barterer. If I would sell him an old pocket-handkerchief, he would buy it. It is his nature; he is a contemptible fellow. And he thinks he will defy me, put me into prison, and he himself will sit here on this sofa with his bottle of rum, the cowardly rascal!" Saying this, he took the empty bottle, and threw it wrathfully against the wooden back of the sofa. "Who was he?" he continued, with increasing fury. "A chattering buffoon. I have made him what he is; I have taught him to pipe, the simpleton. When I pipe he must dance; he is only my decoy-bird; I am the bird-catcher. I am your bird-catcher, you niggardly monster!" Here the old man endeavoured to whistle "*Freit euch des Lebens*," and made an attempt to dance merrily about. Again the cold perspiration streamed from his forehead, and he drew out the rag from his pocket, dried his face, and mechanically replaced it. "He won't come back," he burst out, suddenly; "he leaves me here, and they will find me." He rushed to the door and shook it violently. "The scoundrel has locked me up—a Jew has locked me up," he screamed out, piteously. "I shall die of hunger and thirst in this prison. Oh, oh! he has treated me shamefully, behaved basely to me, his benefactor; he is an ungrateful villain, an unnatural son." Then he began to sob. "I nursed him when he was ill; I have taught him all kinds of tricks: I have made a man of him, and this is the way he rewards his old friend." The lawyer wept aloud and wrung his hands. Suddenly he stopped before the looking-glass, on which the bright light of the lamp fell; frightened, he stared at the figure that stood opposite to him in the mirror. His looks became more and more angry, and the glitter of his eyes more dreadful; he looked from the glass to the frame, fixed his crooked spectacles straight, and moved his head along the frame, as if examining it. The mirror was known to him. Had chance conveyed the piece of furniture from his former smart abode into Pinkus's

secret frippery store, and from thence to Itzig's room, or was the drunkard deceived by a resemblance? However that might be, the recollection of the past filled him with rage. "It is my mirror!" he loudly exclaimed, "my own mirror which the rogue has in his room." Madly he rushed about the room, seized a chair with the strength of frenzy, and thrust its legs against the looking-glass. It broke, clattering in pieces; then again and again the drunkard dashed the chair against the frame, raving out, "It has hung in my room; the rascal has stolen my mirror; he has stolen my fortune; to hell with him!"

At that moment Veitel rushed in. He had heard in the entrance-hall the frantic noise, and feared the worst. When the lawyer saw him entering, he ran at him with the chair raised, and shrieked out, "It is you who have ruined me, you shall pay the reckoning!" and struck at Itzig's head. Itzig caught the chair, flung it aside, and grasped the old man with superior strength. Hippus struggled under his hands like a wild cat, and invoked every curse he could think of on his oppressor's head. Veitel pushed him down vigorously on a corner of the sofa, and holding him fast, whispered, "If you are not quiet, old man, you are done for." The old man saw from Itzig's eyes, which were glaring on him, that he had to fear the worst from the irritated man; the paroxysm left him, he sank down powerless, and whimpered in a low tone, shivering all over, "He will kill me."

"I will not, you tipsy fool, if you are quiet. Why the devil are you making such a havoc in my room?"

"He will kill me," whined the old man, "because I have found my mirror again."

"You are mad," cried Veitel, shaking him; "collect your strength; you cannot stay here, you must be off; I have a hiding-place for you."

"I won't go with you," the old man whimpered; "you will murder me."

With a savage oath Veitel laid hold of the shabby hat, forced it down on the head of the old man, seized him by the neck, and cried, "You must come with me, or you are lost. The police will seek you here, and will find you if you still delay. Come on, you compel me to hurt you."

The old man's strength was broken; he staggered. Veitel took him by the arm, and dragged him off without further resistance. He took him out of the room and down-stairs, spying about anxiously lest they should meet any one. All was quiet. The cold air restored to the lawyer a portion of his senses, and Veitel whispered to him, "Be quiet and follow me, I will get you off."

"He'll get me off," muttered the old man, trotting on by his side. When they approached Pinkus's inn, Veitel walked more cautiously, led his companion into the dark hall, and whispered, "Take my hand and come gently up-stairs." They came to the large common room, and found it empty, as it had been before. Veitel, more at ease, said, "In the next house there is a hiding-place; you must go there."

"I must go there," repeated the old man.

"Follow me," cried Veitel; and he led the lawyer to the balcony, and from thence down the covered stairs.

The old man tottered unsteadily down the steps, clinging fast to his guide's coat, who half carried him down. Thus they descended step by step to the last, over which the stream was rushing. Veitel went forward, and stept with indifference up to his knees in water, endeavouring to draw the lawyer after him.

The old man felt the water on his boots, stopped, and screamed aloud, "Water!"

"Quiet," whispered Veitel, angrily; "don't say a word."

"Water!" screamed the old man; "help! he will murder me!"

Veitel seized him, and stopped his mouth with his hand, but the fear of death had once more roused the senses of the lawyer; he put his foot back upon the next step, clung as well as he could to the side palings, and screamed again, "Help!"

"Crazed rascal," said Veitel, gnashing his teeth, and furious at his obstinate resistance, he knocked the old hat down over his face, seized him with all his strength by the cravat, and flung him down into the river. The water splashed up, the sound of a falling body was heard, and a hollow gurgling, and then all was still.

Under the leaden fog figures, which were still moving down the river with their long robes, a dark mass became once more visible, which the stream was carrying away. Soon it disappeared. The foggy phantoms covered it, the current passed over it. The water broke moaning against the wooden posts and steps of the stairs, and above, the night wind howled its monotonous song.

The door of the deed stood for some moments motionless in the darkness, leaning against the woodwork. Then he slowly ascended. In doing so, he felt the cloth of his garments, to ascertain how far he was wet; he thought he should be obliged to dry them by the stove, this very night; he saw the fire burning in the stove in his room, and himself sitting by it in his dressing-gown, as he liked so much to do, while thinking over his business. If he had ever in his life enjoyed the sensation of comfortable rest, it had been in those hours, when, tired with trudging and with the cares of the day, he laid the wood in the stove, and sat by it until his weary eyes closed. He felt distinctly how tired he now was, and how much good it would do him to fall asleep by the warm fireside. Lost in these misty dreams, he stopped again for some moments, like one who is really falling asleep; at the same time, he felt a dull inward pressure, a pain that made it difficult for him to breathe, and his breast seemed to contract, as with iron bands. He thought of the bale he had just thrown into the water, he saw it dive into the river, he heard the rush of the water, and remembered that the hat which he had forced over the man's face, was to the last still visible on the surface of the water, as a round, odd thing. He saw the hat distinctly before his eyes, worn out, the brim half torn, and on the top two old oil-stains. It was a very shabby hat. As he thought of it, he felt that he could laugh if he chose; but he did not laugh. Whilst his thoughts were hovering, in a kind of torpor, round the spot that was paining his innermost soul, he had reached the top of the stairs. As he closed the door he looked once more into the black tunnel, down which a short time before two had descended, whilst now only one returned. He looked on the grey glimmer of the water, and again he felt the dull pressure. Hurriedly he glided through the large room and down the stairs; in the hall he met with one of the guests who lodged in the caravansary; both hastened past each other without speaking. This meeting gave his thoughts another turn. Was he safe? The fog was still lying thick over the streets, nobody had seen him go in with the lawyer, nobody had recognised him coming out. When the old man was found in the water, the investigation would begin. Was he then still safe?

All this the murderer revolved in his mind, as indifferently as if he were reading his thoughts in a book, and at times the idea came across

him whether he had not a cigar in his pocket, and why he should not smoke one. He meditated on this for some time, and at last arrived at his house. He opened the door. The last time he had done so, he had heard a frantic noise in the second room. He stopped, and listened whether it was not to be heard again; he even wished to hear it. It had been there only a few moments before. Oh, what would he not have given, if those short moments had never been! Again he felt the dull pain, stronger and stronger. He entered the room; the lamp was still burning, the pieces of the rum bottle were still lying about the sofa, the quicksilver of the mirror was shining on the floor like silver thalers. Veitel sat down exhausted on a chair, and stared on the shining fragments of his mirror. Then it occurred to him, that his mother had often told him a fairy tale, in which silver thalers fell on a poor man's floor. He saw the old Jew woman sitting by her hearth, and himself a little boy by her side. He saw himself looking curiously on the black floor, watching whether the silver thalers would not fall down also before him. Now he saw his room look exactly as if silver thalers had been raining down, and he felt something of the excited transport which the little Itzig had felt at his mother's story, and in the midst of this recollection the dull pressure came suddenly again on his soul, he knew not why. Heavily he rose, squatted on the ground, and collected the pieces of glass. He laid them in the cupboard, loosened the frame of the mirror from the wall, and placed it reversed in a corner of the room. Then he took the lamp, and the glass which he was in the habit of filling with fresh water for the night; but when he took the glass, a feverish shiver came over him, and he put it down again. He who was no more had drunk out of that glass. He put the lamp by his bedside, and undressed himself. He hid his trousers in the cupboard, and took another pair out, and rubbed them against his boots, to make them appear dirty. After that, he extinguished the lamp, and as the wick flickered up once more before it went out, it occurred to him accidentally, as something indifferent, that people compared the flame of a candle to the life of man. He had put out a flame. And again he felt the pain in his breast, but indistinctly; his strength was exhausted, his nerves were unstrung. He slept—the murderer slept.

But when he awakens! Then the cunning with which his disturbed spirit, as in a frenzy, seized upon every little image and idea that he could find in the darkness, in order to chase away the one thought, the one feeling which, from henceforth, will for ever press and weigh upon his soul, will be gone. When he awakes! then he will feel, while still half-sleeping, that rest has fled from him, and anguish and misery made their entrance into his soul; while still dreaming, he will feel how sweet unconsciousness is, and how terrible thought. He will struggle against awaking; but in his struggling, the pain will become always stronger, always more gnawing. At last, in despair, he will open his eyes, and stare into the frightful reality, the frightful future.

And again, his mind will begin to cover the ghastly phantom with subtle threads, and to collect together every possible reason to make the monster indiscernible. He will think how old the dead man was, how wicked, how miserable! He will try to represent to himself, that it was only an accident which occasioned the death; a swing of his arm, caused by sudden rage. What an unfortunate accident it was, that the old man's feet did not meet with firm ground! Then it will suddenly occur to him whether he is safe, and a burning, feverish anguish will colour his pale face. The step of the servant on the stairs will fill him with terror; the clatter of some iron bar on the court, he will take for the noise of

weapons, which the law has sent against him. And again his mind will toil, while he runs distractedly up and down his room; he will go through every step that he took yesterday, every movement of his hand, every word that he spoke, and will, by each, endeavour to prove that it is impossible for him to be discovered. No one has seen, no one heard it; the wretched old man, half-crazed as he was, had drawn his hat over his eyes, and drowned himself.

Thus he will again, from this point, spin his threads round the finger of the old man. But he always feels the dreadful weight, till at last, exhausted with the inward struggle, he rushes out of the house to his business, among men, full of a longing to find something that will make him forget. Whoever looks at him in the street will annoy him; when he catches sight of a policeman, he must get quickly into a house, in order to conceal his terror from prying eyes. Wherever he finds persons whom he knows, he will press into the thickest of the throng; he will turn his head everywhere, take an interest in everything, and will talk and laugh as usual; but his eyes will wander about unsteadily, and his heart will constantly be in fear of hearing something of the murdered one, and what people think of his sudden death. He deludes his friends; they will, perhaps, think him particularly lively, and sometimes one or other of them will say, "Itzig is in good spirits; he has done some good business." He will hang on many an arm which before he never touched, and tell many stories, and accompany people home, because he knows he cannot be alone. He will hurry into coffee-rooms, and beer-houses, and seek out acquaintance, will sit down with them, will drink, and become excited like them, because he knows that he dare not be alone.

When he comes home late in the evening, worn out almost to breaking down, relaxed, and wasted by the dreadful struggle, he feels easier, he has contrived to distract his thoughts, and he finds a dull comfort in his weariness and consciousness, and awaits sleep as the only happiness he has now on earth. And he will sleep again, and when he awakes the next morning all the cobwebs will be torn, and the terrible work will begin again.

So it will go on, one day, many days, always, as long as he lives. He no longer lives like other men. His existence is henceforth a combat, a dreadful combat, against a corpse; a combat which no one sees, but which alone occupies his mind. What he does in his business, in the society of the living, is only an appearance, a lie. When he laughs, and when he shakes hands with others, when he lends on pledge, and takes fifty per cent., all is but to delude others. He knows that he is an outcast from the society of men, that all he does is empty and contemptible; only one thing occupies him, one thing he strives against, only for one thing he drinks, and chatters, and goes about amongst men: and that one thing is—the old man in the water.

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## CHAPTER X.

BESIDES the cat on Anthony's writing-table, other living beings enjoyed a secret triumph. Whoever knew the house and its inmates well—as for example, the aunt—saw through the delusions which certain people fostered in themselves and others. It was possible, strangers might shake their heads about much that was going on in the family, but the

aunt did so as little as the other good spirits of the house. No doubt, it appeared very odd that Anthony sat in the office with pale cheeks, still and silent, and never was with the family except at dinner; that Sabine showed, in the presence of her brother, a tendency to blush, which she had never had before; that she sat over her work for hours without speaking a word, and then suddenly ran about the house like a kitten playing with a ball of thread: and, finally, that the master of the house was always looking at Anthony, whether he was talking or silent, and became, from day to day, more cheerful, and never ceased teasing the aunt. But whoever, like her, had known for many years what the favourite dishes—which were only put on the table once a month—of these persons were, had knitted their stockings, and starched their collars, as the aunt had done for all these three, would certainly find out their sly ways, and of course she did so.

The good aunt claimed the credit of having brought Anthony back. Her object had been, to bring back to the office one whom she herself liked. She had no thought of anything further, at least she would have denied it to any one during the first days after Anthony's return. For in spite of the pink linings of the coverlids, she knew that the house to which she belonged was a proud house, which had a peculiar will of its own, and required to be treated very delicately. And when she heard that the dispirited Anthony was to remain only as a guest, she, for some weeks, became doubtful. But soon she recovered her secret superiority over the merchant and her niece, for she made discoveries. The second floor of the front part of the house had for many years been uninhabited. The merchant had lived there, with his young wife, during the lifetime of his parents; but when, in the course of a short space of time, he lost his parents, his wife, and little son, he had moved down-stairs, and ever since had disliked entering the upper story. Grey blinds covered the windows all the year round, and the furniture and pictures were hung with grey. The whole story was like the enchanted castle of Dornroschen, and the ladies involuntarily walked more softly when they had to cross the slumbering empire.

The aunt was coming down from the garret. In her endless war with Herr Pix, she had preserved only a small place for drying the linen. She was just thinking that men were wonderfully changed by their social position, for Balbus, the successor of Pix, on the modesty of whose character she had founded great hopes, had shown himself, in his new office, as much bent on usurpation as his predecessor. Again she found a heap of cigar-boxes piled up, outside the three rooms which Pix had built upon her domain, and she was then on the point of declaring war with Herr Balbus when she saw, with alarm, a door of one of the rooms of the second story wide open: she thought for the first moment of thieves, and was going to cry for help, when the rational idea came across her, to examine into this striking phenomenon. She slipped gently into the room, but she was nearly petrified with wonder when she saw her nephew alone in the apartment. He who, since the death of his wife, had avoided this part of the house, was now standing in the room in which she had died. With his hands folded, deep in thought, he stood looking at a picture, which represented his wife as a bride, in a white satin dress, with a myrtle wreath in her hair. The aunt could not help breathing a sympathetic sigh. The merchant turned round surprised. "I mean to take the picture down into my room," he said, in a soft voice.

"But you have another picture of Marie there. This has always put you out of humour," exclaimed the aunt

"Years make one more tranquil," answered the merchant, "and another portrait will come here in time."

The aunt's eyes shone like two balls of fire, as she asked, "Another?"

"It was only a passing thought," said the merchant, evasively, walking on and examining attentively the suite of apartments. The aunt walked proudly after him, mentally shrugging her shoulders, and saying to herself, "These people may dissimulate as much as they please, it is no longer any use."

And the cautious Sabine did not fare better.

Anthony had been sitting silently at dinner by the aunt. When he moved his chair and rose, she saw that Sabine's eyes had been resting with tender sorrow on his pale face, and were filled with tears. After he had left the room, Sabine rose also, and went to the window looking upon the court. The aunt drew near her, and peeped from behind the curtain. Sabine was gazing intently down into the court; suddenly she smiled and looked quite pleased. The aunt glided carefully nearer, and looking down also into the court, found there was nothing to be seen but Anthony, who, with his back towards them, was caressing Pluto. He was giving the dog some pieces of bread, and Pluto was barking and jumping joyfully about him.

"Oh, oh," said the aunt to herself, "it is not about Pluto that she is weeping and laughing in the same breath."

Shortly after, the nephew one morning opened the door of the ladies' room, and the aunt beheld in the ante-room a man with a large parcel. Her sharp eyes recognised the errand-boy of a famous mercer's shop. The merchant called his sister into the next room, and the aunt listened. First the nephew spoke, and then Sabine, but quite low; then she heard a kind of murmur, which much resembled suppressed sobbing. "Why, this girl is becoming lackadaisical," she thought, with surprise. She was on the point of entering the room, when they returned. Sabine was leaning on her brother's arm, her cheeks and eyes were red, but she looked happy and bashful. After a longer pause than the aunt thought civil, she went into the next room to look for something, and found the large parcel lying on a chair. She accidentally touched it with her hand, and as the paper was not fastened, it of course opened, and she beheld splendid stuffs for furniture, and underneath she made another discovery, which worked so upon her nerves that she could not help bursting into tears on the spot. It was a white gown of the richest material, which a woman only wears once in her life, on a solemn day full of devotion and joyful awe.

Henceforth the aunt treated her companions as a housewife does those who for a time conduct themselves foolishly, but whom she forgives, as she knows well that the end of this affected conduct will be a vigorous movement in her own domain, energetic work in the kitchen, a long bill of fare, great slaughter of fowls, and a destructive attack on all the preserved fruits. She, in her turn, became mysterious. All the little pots and casks with confiteurs were suddenly submitted to an extraordinary revision, and at dinner there appeared from time to time exquisite attempts at new dishes. The aunt came on these days with heated cheeks from the kitchen, and was very touchy if everyone did not find the new dish perfect, although she never failed to add, "It is only a preliminary attempt of the cook." And then she looked at her nephew and Sabine with a triumphant expression of superiority, which was intended to say



"I have discovered all," and the merchant was obliged to knit his brows and give her a severe look.

But he did not always look severe. Sabine and Anthony became every day quieter and more reserved, but the merchant was visibly more cheerful. He was now more talkative than he had been for years, and was always endeavouring to engage Anthony in conversation at the dinner-table. He made him talk, and listened with attention to every word that came from his lips. At first he often looked inquiringly towards Anthony's desk, but, after a short time, he went on with his business as if his relations with Anthony had never altered. He walked with elastic step through the front office, though trade was still very flat; he seemed to care little about it, and when Herr Braun, the agent, poured out his oppressed heart, he laughed, and cut a short joke.

Anthony was not aware of this change. When he worked in the office, he sat silent, opposite to Herr Bauman, and endeavoured to think of nothing but the letters. He spent the evenings principally alone in his room, and then immersed himself in the books which he had inherited from Fink, and so tried to escape from his gloomy thoughts.

He did not find the Firm as he had left it. For many years everything had been steady there, now the business was in an uneasy, fluctuating state. Many of the old connections of the house had been broken, and many new ones made. He found new agents, new customers, many new articles, and new workmen.

In the lower house, also, everything had grown quiet. Besides the dignitaries of the second office, Herr Liebold and Herr Purzell, who had never been exciting elements of the society, he found, of his former friends, only the faithful Bauman and Specht. Bauman had, immediately after Anthony's return, imparted to the Principal that he must set off on the following spring, and even Anthony's earnest remonstrances rebounded from the firm resolution of the missionary. "I cannot delay my departure," he said; "my conscience revolts against it. I shall go to London for a year to the missionary college, and from thence wherever they send me. I confess that I have a predilection for Africa. There are some kings"—he mentioned some unpronounceable names—"who, I think, are not bad. One must have some chance of making converts there, the way they live is wretched. I hope to make them give up the slave-trade. They may use their people at home to plant sugar-canes and rice. In a few years I will send you the first samples of our plantations, *via* London."

Herr Specht also came to Anthony. "You have always been a good friend to me, Wohlfart. I should like to have your opinion; I am going to marry a charming girl, her name is Fanny, and she is niece of C. Pix."

"Indeed," said Anthony, "and you love the young lady?"

"Yes, I love her," exclaimed Specht, enraptured, "but I am also to enter into Pix's business when I marry, and it is on that account I wish for your advice. My love has some property, and Pix thinks that it would be best placed in his trade. Now you know that Pix is a good fellow at bottom, but I should prefer another partner."

"I think not, my old friend," said Anthony. "You are a little too eager, and it will always be good for you to have a steady partner. Pix will oblige you always to do according to his will, and there will be no harm in that—you will go on all the better."

"Yes," said Specht; "but think of the branch he has undertaken. No man would have thought it possible that he should have made such a choice."

"What has he done, then?" asked Anthony.

"Such a mixture!" cried Specht; "what he would not have looked at formerly—furs and skins of all kinds, from sable down to moleskin; and besides that, felt and the like, quite contrary to his nature—everything that is hairy and bristly. There are vulgar articles amongst them, Wohlfart."

"Don't be a child," answered Anthony; "marry, my good fellow, and place yourself under the guardianship of your relation; it will do you no harm."

On the following day Pix himself came to Anthony's room: "I have found your card, Wohlfart, and am come to invite you to drink coffee with us on Sunday. Cuba and a manilla. You must make acquaintance with my wife."

"And so you are going to take Specht as your partner," asked Anthony. "I thought you had always a great aversion to any partnership."

"I would not do it with anybody but him. I must tell you in confidence that I am in the poor fellow's debt, and I can make use of the ten thousand in my trade that he gets on his marriage. I have also taken a retail shop, d—d furs and skins; there I shall put him; it will be an amusement to him; he can every day show civilities to the ladies who come into the shop, and he can hang a new fur coat on his shoulders every year. He will be more usefully employed than in the office."

"How is it that you have chosen this particular trade?" asked Anthony.

"I was obliged," answered Pix. "I found a large store of goods left by my predecessor, in a sorry state I assure you, and I was placed at once in a large society of people who thought hare skins and pigs' bristles of great value."

"That alone did not determine you," answered Anthony, laughing.

"Perhaps it was something else," said Pix. "I must remain here on account of my wife; and you see, Anthony, that I, who have been manager of the provincial branch of this Firm, could not settle here in the same business. I know the whole of the provincial branch better than the Principal, and all the small customers know me better than him. I should have done harm to his business, for although my means are smaller, I could easily have got a very good business, which would have injured the house. So I was obliged to choose something else. I went, therefore, to Herr Schroeter as soon as I had taken the resolution, and talked it over with him. 'I shall compete with you only in one thing, and that is horsehair, and in that I shall cut you out.' I told the Principal so."

"The Firm will bear that," said Anthony, shaking the hand of the bristle-dealer.

It was not in the office alone, but also among the workmen round the great balance, that a change had taken place. Father Sturm, the faithful friend of the house, threatened to leave the Firm and this little world.

One of the first inquiries Anthony made, upon his return, was after Father Sturm. He had been unwell for some weeks, and did not leave his room. Full of anxiety, Anthony hastened, the second evening after his arrival, to the giant's house.

Even in the street he heard a loud humming, as if a swarm of gigantic bees had settled themselves in the pink house. When he entered the house the humming increased to the distinct growl of a family of lions.

Wondering, he knocked. No one answered. When he opened the door, he was obliged to stop on the threshold, for at first he could see nothing in the room but a grey impenetrable smoke, in which a yellow point of light was suspended in vapour. Gradually he distinguished some dark balls which were placed round the light, like planets round the sun. He saw something more, which might be a man's arm, but looked very like the leg of an elephant. At last the draught of air entering through the door set the smoke in motion, and he succeeded in catching a glimpse of the interior of the room. Never did abode of man so much resemble a tavern of Cyclops. Six giants were sitting by the table; three were on a bench, and three on oak chairs; all had cigars in their mouths, and wooden beer-mugs before them on the table. The growling which made the house shake was their conversation, which, as they spoke low, was intended for a sick-room.

"I smell something," cried out a deep voice; "a man must be here; there comes a draught of cold air; the door is open. Whoever it is, let him speak."

"Herr Sturm!" cried out Anthony, from the threshold.

The balls took to a rotatory motion, and eclipsed the light.

"Listen," cried out the voice again, "there is a man."

"Yes," answered Anthony, "and an old friend, too."

"I know that voice," was called out hastily from behind the table.

Anthony approached the light; the packers rose and called his name out loud. Father Sturm sidled to the end of his bench, and held out both his hands to Anthony. "I knew already through my comrades that you were here. It is a great pleasure to me that you are come back safe from that country, from those scythemen and brawlers who put their barrels of sour krout in their rooms." Anthony first gave his hand to old Sturm, who gave it a hearty shake, and patted it, and then to the five other men, and got it back again, red, swollen, and shaken in the wrist, so that he put it directly into his coat pocket. Whilst the packers were, one after the other, exchanging greetings with Anthony, Sturm suddenly interrupted them by asking, "When does my Karl come?"

"Have you written to tell him to come?" asked Anthony.

"Written," repeated Sturm, shaking his head; "no, I have not done so; I cannot do it on account of his situation as bailiff. For if I write to him 'Come,' he would come, even if a million scythemen were marching between him and us; but he can be of use there with the master, and therefore if he does not come of his own accord he shall not do so."

"He will come in the spring," said Anthony, looking intently at the father.

The old man shook his head again: "He will not come in the spring, at least not to me; it is possible that my little dwarf may come then, but not to his father."

He put his beer mug up to his lips, and took a long draught, clapped the lid down, and cleared his throat vigorously; then he gave Anthony a look of resolution, and pressed his fist on the table as if to seal it. "Fifty," he said, "it only wants fourteen days of it."

Anthony put his arm round the shoulders of the old man, and looked inquiringly in the faces of the others, who were standing with their cigars in their hands, in front of him, like the chorus of a Greek tragedy. "Mark you, Herr Wohlfart," the chorus leader began, who considered as a man was large, but as a giant was smaller than his chief, "I will explain it to you. This man's opinion is that he becomes weaker, and

that he will continue to become weaker, and that in a short time the day will come when we packers must take a lemon\* in our hands and wear a black tail to our hats. But this is not our wish." All of them shook their heads, and looked disapprovingly at their chief. "I must tell you, it is an old quarrel between us and him, about the fifty years. Now he is determined to be in the right, and our opinion is, that he is in the wrong. He has become weaker, that is possible. Sometimes one has more strength, sometimes less. But why need the man on that account leave the world? I will tell you, Herr Wohlfart, what it is—it is an extravagance of his."

All the giants assented to these words by nodding their heads.

"Is he then ill?" asked Anthony, anxiously. "Where is the seat of your illness, old friend?"

"It is here, and it is there," answered Sturm. "It hovers in the air, it comes slowly on, and takes away first the strength, and then the breath; begins with the legs, and then rises higher." He pointed to his feet.

"Have you pain in getting up?" asked Anthony.

"That is just what it is," answered the giant; "it becomes difficult to me—every day more so. And I tell you, Wilhelm," he continued, addressing the former speaker, "in fourteen days it will be all over with me, and you will have to carry your lemons. And I hope your faces will be sorrowful for a few hours—at least till the evening; then you shall come back here, and sit down in this very place. I will take care that the mugs shall be here as to-day. Then you can talk of old Sturm as of a comrade who is gone to his rest, and who will no longer have any burdens; for I think where I am going to nothing will be a burden to me."

"There, you hear him," said Wilhelm, sorrowfully. "He is rambling again."

"What does the physician say of your illness?" asked Anthony.

"The doctor, indeed!" said old Sturm; "if one were to ask him, he would say enough; but we don't ask him. Between ourselves, there is no relying upon doctors. They may know what is the matter with some men—I don't deny that; but how should they know what is the matter with one of us? None of them can lift a cask."

"If you have no doctor, dear Herr Sturm, I will directly begin to be yours," cried Anthony, hastening to the windows, and opening them. "If you have difficulty in breathing, this thick air must be poison to you; and if you suffer from your feet, you must give up drinking." And he put the beer-jug on the other table.

"Ay! ay! ay!" said Sturm, watching the busy Anthony, "the intention is good, but it is of no use. A little smoke keeps one warm, and we are accustomed to beer. If I sit the whole day alone on this bench, without work and without company, it is a pleasure to me when my comrades come in the evening, and have their comforts with me. They talk to me, and I hear their voices as formerly, and learn something about the business, and what is going on in the world."

But you yourself ought to abstain from beer, and avoid tobacco-smoke," answered Anthony. "Your Karl would tell you the same; and as he is not here, you must allow me to take his place." He turned to the other packers. "I will endeavour to show him that he is wrong. Leave me half an hour alone with him."

\* When the handicraft men bury one of their corporation they carry a lemon in their hand.

The giants withdrew. Anthony sat down opposite the invalid, and spoke of what gave most pleasure to the father—his son.

Sturm fought his gloomy forebodings, and got into the most happy frame of mind. At last he looked at Anthony with twinkling eyes, and said confidently to him, leaning over towards him, "Nineteen hundred thalers. He was here again."

"I hope you gave him nothing," asked Anthony, anxiously.

"Only a hundred thalers," said the old man, deprecatingly. "Now he is dead, the poor young man! He looked so gay with his lace on his coat. A man ought not to die as long as he is a son. It gives too great pain to the heart."

"With respect to your money, I have spoken to Herr von Fink, and he will arrange that the debt shall be paid to you."

"To Karl," said the old man, correcting him, and looking towards his bed-room. "And, Herr Wohlfart, will you undertake to deliver to my Karl what is in the box there, in case I should not see my little one again?"

"If you do not give up that thought, Sturm," cried Anthony, "I shall become your enemy, and I shall henceforth treat you with the greatest severity. To-morrow morning I shall come again, and bring Herr Schroeter's physician with me."

"He may be a good man," said Sturm. "His horses are well fed; they are strong and big; but he can be of no use to me."

The following morning the physician visited the patient.

"I cannot consider his state as dangerous," he said; "his feet are swollen, but that may go off. An inactive and sedentary life is unwholesome for so powerful a man, and his diet is so bad that serious illness will soon probably arise."

Anthony wrote this immediately to Karl, and added, "Under these circumstances, your father's belief that he will not outlive his fiftieth birthday occasions me the greatest anxiety. The best thing would be for you to come yourself about that time."

Some time had passed since Anthony had written to Karl, in the meanwhile Anthony had daily visited the invalid. No striking change had taken place in Sturm's condition, but he stuck obstinately to his resolution of not outliving his birth-day. One morning the servant came to Anthony's room, and informed him that the packer Sturm desired to see him immediately.

"Is he worse?" asked Anthony, alarmed. "I will go to him at once."

"He himself is in a cart at the door," said the servant.

Anthony hastened out. A carrier's cart was standing there. Large hoops spanned the body of the cart, and over these a white cloth was stretched. A corner of the cloth was turned back, and father Sturm's head appeared covered with a huge fur cap. The giant looked down upon Anthony and the servants, who were thronging around the cart, like a great bugbear on frightened children, but his own face looked very sad. He held out a sheet of paper to Anthony. "Read this, Herr Wohlfart. I have had such a letter from my poor Karl. I must go to him immediately. To the estate beyond Rosmin," he called out to the driver—a stout carrier, who was standing near the cart.

Anthony looked at the letter; it was written in the clumsy characters of the forester. He read with surprise the contents:—"My dear father, I cannot come to you, for a scytheman has cut off what was remaining of

my hand. Therefore I beg of you to set off, on the receipt of this letter, to your poor son. Take a large waggon, and drive as far as Rosmin; there put up at the 'Red Stag.' At the 'Stag' a waggon and ploughboy from the estate will be waiting for you. The lad does not understand a word of German, but is otherwise a good fellow; he will know you. Buy yourself a fur coat for the journey, and fur boots; these must come over your knees, and have leather soles. If you should not find boots that will fit your large legs, our gossip the furrier must sew some fur over your legs in the course of the night. Greet Herr Wohlfart. Your faithful KARL."

Anthony held the letter in his hand, and did not know at first what to make of it.

"What do you say to this new misfortune?" asked the giant, sorrowfully.

"At all events, you must go directly to your son," said Anthony.

"Of course I must," answered the packer. "The misfortune bears hard upon me just now. The day after to-morrow is the *Fifty*!"

Anthony observed the connection. "Are you prepared, as Karl wishes?"

"I am," said the giant, pulling the linen cover back; "it is all right—the fur and also the boots." Anthony looked into the cart, and had great difficulty in keeping his countenance. Enveloped in a large wolf-skin, Sturm occupied the whole breadth of the vehicle; his legs, too, were sewn up in wolf-skins. If he never looked like a monster before, he did so now. His cap touched the white cover above, and the columns of his feet filled the whole space between the front and back seat. He was sitting on a mattress, and had sacks of hay for a support to his back. The little space left in the cart was taken up with all sorts of boxes and parcels of provisions, which his fellow-packers had skilfully tied up for their departing chief; small casks and boxes were stuck on all sides, and just in front of him, a smoked sausage and travelling flask were hanging down from the hoop. Thus he sat, like a primeval bear in his winter den. A great sword was lying by his side. "Against those scythemen," he said, and shook it wrathfully. "I have still one request to make to you. Wilhelm keeps the key of my house. I beg you to take this box; it contains what was under my bed; keep it for Karl."

"I shall deliver the box to Herr Schroeter," Anthony replied; "he has driven to the station, and may come back at any moment."

"Greet him," said the giant, "him and Fraulein Sabine; and tell them both, that I thank them with my whole heart for all the kindness that they have shown me and my Karl during my whole life." Much affected, he gazed into the hall. "Many a happy year have I laboured there. If the rings of your hundredweights are as smooth as if they were polished, my hands have honestly helped to do it. I have shared in whatever has befallen this house for thirty years, both in prosperity and adversity; and I can truly say, Herr Wohlfart, that we were always sound. I shall no longer roll your casks, and another will help you to raise the ladders to the waggons. Think sometimes of old Sturm when you are fastening up a sugar-barrel. Nothing can last for ever in this world—even what is strong comes to an end; but this Firm, Herr Wohlfart, will stand and flourish, so long as it has a chief like the present, and men like you, and honest hands round the balance. This is my heart's wish!" He folded his hands on the wicker-work, and tears rolled over his cheeks. "And now farewell, Herr Wohlfart; give me your hand!" He pulled off a large fur glove, and put his hand out of the cart. "And you, Peter,

Frantz, Gottfreed, and you servants all, farewell, and remember me kindly!" Sabine's dog came wagging its tail, and sprang up to the body of the cart. "There is old Pluto, also," cried out Sturm, stroking the dog's head with his hand. "Adieu, Pluto!"—the dog licked his hand. "Adieu, all!" cried he. "To Rosmin, driver!" So saying, he drew back into the cart. The vehicle rattled over the pavement; and after a little while, the white cloth opened again; Sturm's big head looked once more back, and he waved his hand.

Anthony was for several days in great anxiety about the fate of Sturm. At last there came a letter from Karl:—

"Dear Herr Wohlfart," wrote Karl, "you will have guessed why I wrote those last lines to my Goliath. It was necessary to get him out of his room, and cure him of his frenzy about the birthday; and therefore, in my fright, I thought of a fib. It happened in the following way. The day before his birthday the driver waited for him at the Stag, at Rosmin. I myself stopped at the inn opposite, in order to see how my father came, and how he looked. I hid myself. Towards noon, the cart came rattling slowly along. The carrier helped my father from the cart, for it was very difficult for him to descend, so that I was alarmed about his feet; and yet it was chiefly owing to the fur and the shaking of the cart. The old man, when in the street, took a letter in his hand, and read it; then he placed himself before Jasch (who had run up to the cart, and who was to feign not to understand a word of German), and made him various signs and fearful gestures. He held his hand two feet from the pavement, and when the lad shook his head the old man ducked down to the ground. This was to signify, 'my dwarf,' but Jasch could not understand it. Then my father grasped the wrist of one of his hands with the other, and shook the hand violently before Jasch's face, so that the lad, already sufficiently frightened at the big man, was nearly running away. But at last my father, with his things, was stowed away in our wicker carriage, after he had gone round it several times, and felt it suspiciously. Thus he drove off. I had instructed the driver to go straight to the forester's lodge, and had settled everything with the forester. I rode along a byeway, and arrived there before him; and when the carriage came in the evening, I had got into the forester's bed, and had my hand tied up under the coverlid, lest I should stretch it out in my joy. When the old man came to my bed, he was so much touched that he wept, and it pierced me to the heart to be obliged to deceive him. I told him that I was already better, and that the physician had given me permission to get up the next day. Then he became more tranquil, and said to me, with a solemn air, that he was glad of that, as to-morrow would be a great day for him, and I should have to come to his bed. Therewith he began again with his frenzy; but before long he became gay. The forester came, and we supped on what the Fraulein had sent us from the castle. I offered my old man the beer, which he thought very bad; so the forester made some punch, and we all three drank heartily of it—my father with his desperate fancies, I with my cut-off hand, and the forester.

"From the warm room, the long journey, and the punch, my father soon became sleepy. I had provided a large bed, which was placed in the forester's room. As he wished me good-night, he kissed my head, and said, 'To-morrow, then, my dwarf.' He went to sleep directly; and how soundly he slept! I lay down on the forester's bed and watched him all night. It was an anxious time, and I could not help listening to his breathing. He awoke late the following morning. As soon as he

moved in his bed, the forester entered the room, and whilst still at the door, clasped his hands together, and exclaimed repeatedly, 'Good heavens, Herr Sturm! what have you done?' 'What have I done?' asked my Goliath, still half asleep, and looking round the room in astonishment. The birds began screaming, and everything seemed so strange to him that he did not know if he was still on the earth or not. 'Where am I, then?' he cried out; 'this place is not in the Bible.' But the forester went on ejaculating, 'Nay, such a thing was never heard of!' till at last the old man got quite alarmed, and asked anxiously, 'Why, what is the matter?' 'What have you been doing, Herr Sturm?' repeated the forester; 'you have slept two nights and a day!' 'Nothing of the kind,' said my old man; 'to-day is the 13th; it is Wednesday.' 'No,' said the forester, it is Thursday, the 14th.' Thus they went on disputing, till at length the forester fetched his almanac, in which he had crossed out all the past days, including the present day, and under the Tuesday he had written, among his other remarks, 'This evening, at seven o'clock, Bailiff Sturm's father came—a large man, who can bear a good deal of punch;' and under Wednesday, 'To-day the father has slept during the whole day.' My old man read it, and at last said, quite perplexed, 'It is true; here it is in writing. Tuesday, at seven o'clock, I came—the large man and the punch—it all agrees together. Wednesday is past, and to-day is the 14th!' He laid the almanac down and sat up in his bed quite bewildered. 'Where is my son Karl?' he exclaimed, at last. Now I entered the room. I had bound up my hand under my coat, and acted my part like the forester, till at last the old man cried out, 'I am bewitched! I do not know what to think!' 'Don't you see,' I said, 'that I am up? Yesterday, when you were sleeping, the doctor came here, and allowed me to get up. Now I am already strong enough to lift that chair with my stiff arm.' 'Not anything heavy,' said the old man; and I continued, 'I have consulted the doctor about you. He is a clever man, and said to us, "Either—or; either he will go off or sleep through it; if he sleeps the whole day he will get over it. He is in danger, but such accidents happen to men."' 'Yes, to us packers,' said the old man. So we persuaded him to get up, and he was very merry. However, I had great fears about him the whole day, and never left his side. We did not allow him to go out of the yard. Nevertheless, in the afternoon all was nearly lost, when the bailiff of the new farm came to speak to me. Fortunately, the forester had locked the yard door. He went out to him, and gave him instructions. When he came in, my father called out to him, whilst still at a distance, 'What is to-day, comrade?' 'Thursday, the 14th,' said the bailiff. My father's face beamed all over: 'Now it is safe—now I believe it.' He slept another night at the forester's, till the birthday was over.

"On the following morning I had the carriage up to the door, drove my father to the farm, and took him into the room opposite mine, where the engineer used to live. I had arranged the room in a hurry. Herr von Fink, who knew all, had sent good furniture from the castle. I had hung up old Blucher, and let in the robin-redbreasts. I placed there the joiner's bench and some tools, to make the room comfortable for him. Then I said to him, 'This is your room, old man; you must remain with me.' 'Oh, ho!' said he, 'this won't do, my dwarf!' 'It must be so,' I answered; 'I will have it, Herr von Fink will, Herr Wohlfart will, and Herr Schroeter will. You must give in. We shall not part any more, as long as we are both in this world.' Thereupon I took my hand out of my coat, and gave him a good lecture; told him how unwholesome his



life had been, and that in consequence of his fancies he would have abandoned me; and so I went on till he became quite softened, and made me all kinds of good promises. Then Herr von Fink came and greeted my father in his cheerful manner; and in the afternoon the Fraulein came, leading the baron. The blind gentleman seemed uncommonly delighted with my father; his voice pleased him much; he tried to feel his size, and at parting called him a man after his own heart. That must be the case, for since then he has come every afternoon to my father's little room, and listens to his cutting and hammering.

"Father is still wondering at all he sees here, and also about the day he spent in sleeping. He is not yet quite clear on the subject, but he probably guesses it; for sometimes he seizes my head in the middle of a conversation, and calls me a rogue. I suppose he will substitute this word for the old one of 'dwarf,' although it is a still worse one for a bailiff. He will occupy himself with wheelwrights' work; he has to-day been cutting out spokes for wheels. I only fear that his work will be rather clumsy. I am glad to have him here, and that everything has gone off so well; if he only gets through the winter, he will lose the weakness of his feet by exercise. He will sell the little house, but only to a packer. He begs of you to offer it to Wilhelm, who lodges there; he is to have it cheaper than a stranger."

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## CHAPTER XI.

A WEEK after the death of the lawyer, Anthony was sitting in his room writing to Fink. He told him that the body had been found at the end of the town, by the weir, but that the cause of his death was not clear. A child in the house where the deceased used to live had stated, that on the evening of the domiciliary visit he had met him in the street, near his home; since that he had not seen him again. Under these circumstances, suicide was not improbable. The agent of police firmly maintained his opinion, that the hat pushed down over his head indicated the hand of another person. The papers had not been found when his dwelling was searched. The further investigations of the police had led to no result. His own opinion of the fearful incident was, that Itzig had something to do with it.

Just then the door opened, the Galician entered the room hastily, and, without speaking, laid an old pair of spectacles, with a rusty steel frame, on the table before him. Anthony looked at the man's terrified face, and started up.

"His spectacles," whispered Tinkeles, in a hoarse voice; "I found them by the water-side. Good God, that I should have met with such a shock!"

"Whose spectacles, and where did you find them?" asked Anthony. He guessed what the Galician had not the courage to say, and continued, "Compose yourself, Tinkeles, and speak."

"It cannot remain concealed, it cries to heaven," burst out the Galician, in great agitation. "You shall hear all that has happened. Two days after I had spoken to you about the hundred thalers, I went to my sleeping-place at Loebel Pinkus's. As I entered the house a man ran against me in the dark. I thought to myself, 'Is that Itzig, or is it

not?' I said, 'It is Itzig; it is his run, as he runs when he is in a hurry. When I came up-stairs into the large room, it was empty, and I sat down by the table and examined my letter-case. Whilst I was thus sitting, the wind was blowing strong: it rattled against the balustrade, and it continued rattling, as if some one was standing outside who wished to come in, but could not open the door. I was frightened, and put up my letters, and called out, 'If any one is there, let him say so.' Nobody answered, but the rattling continued. Then I took courage. I laid hold of the lamp, and went to the balcony, and looked into every corner of it. I saw no one. Again there was a clattering straight before me, and a loud creaking; a door flew open which I had never seen open before, and from the door a staircase led down to the water. When I threw a light on the steps, I saw that a wet foot had passed up them; the traces of the foot-step were to be seen, even into the room, wet spots on the floor. And I wondered, and said to myself, 'Schmiei,' says I, 'who went by night from the water into the room, and left the door open, like a ghost? It is no business of thine,' says I, and I was frightened.

"Before I closed the door, I once more, with the lamp, examined the stairs, and then I saw something on the last step, by the water, that sparkled in the light. I went down step by step, alas! I can tell you, Herr Wohlfart, it was hard work. The wind howled and blew my lamp about, and the steps down to the water were as dark as a well; and what I picked up is there"—he pointed to the spectacles—"the glasses he used to wear."

"And how do you know that they are the spectacles of the deceased?" asked Anthony, with eager attention.

"They may be known by the joint, which is tied up with black thread. I have seen him with these spectacles more than once in Pinkus's room. I put the spectacles in my pocket, and thought, 'I will say nothing of the affair to Pinkus, but will give them to Hippus himself, and see if they could be of any use in our business. And I have carried the spectacles about till to-day, waiting for Hippus; and when he did not come, I asked Pinkus, who answered, 'I myself do not know where he is.' To-day, at noon, when I arrived at the inn, Pinkus rushed to meet me, and said, 'Schmiei,' says he, 'if you wish to speak to Hippus, you must go into the water; he has been found in the water.' It went like a shot through my heart, when he said, 'Go and seek him in the water,' and I was obliged to support myself by the wall."

Anthony hastened to his desk, wrote some lines to the police official, who had only just left his room, rang for the servant, and ordered him to deliver the note immediately.

Meanwhile Tinkeles sank into a chair, as if broken down: he stared at the table, and muttered some unintelligible words.

Anthony, scarcely less agitated, paced up and down the room. There was a gloomy silence. It was only once broken, when the Galician changed from his muttering to a louder tone, and asked, "Do you think that the spectacles are worth the hundred thalers that you have for me in your desk?"

"I do not yet know," answered Anthony, shortly, and continued his walk about the room.

Schmiei relapsed into his torpor and moaning, and clasping his trembling hands; at last he looked up again, and said, "Or, at least, fifty?"

"Have done with your bargaining," exclaimed Anthony, sternly.

"Why am I not to speak?" cried out Tinkeles, provoked; "I am

suffering great anxiety. Is it to be for nothing?" And again he gave way to his grief.

The conversation was interrupted by the arrival of the official. The shrewd man made the dealer repeat his report, took the spectacles, ordered a carriage for himself and the reluctant Tinkeles, and said to Anthony, on leaving, "Be prepared for a speedy *dénouement*; whether I shall accomplish my object is doubtful, but there is now a prospect of your recovering the documents for which you are seeking."

"At what a price!" said Anthony, shuddering.

The room in Ehrenthal's house was brightly lighted up, a faint glimmer fell through the drawn curtains on the thick fog, which fell like drizzling rain in the streets. Several rooms were opened, heavy silver candlesticks were standing about; brilliant teapots and bright china dishes; every ornament had been cleaned and displayed, the dark floor had been newly waxed, and even the cook had a fresh plaited cap on; the whole house had been washed and cleaned. The beautiful Rosalie was standing in the midst of this splendour, dressed in yellow silk, with purple flowers, lovely as a houri from paradise, and ready, like them, to receive her bridegroom. Her mother smoothed the folds of her rich silk dress, looked triumphantly at her work, and said, in a transport of motherly feeling, "How beautiful you are to-day, Rosalie, my only child!" But Rosalie was too much accustomed to this worship from her mother to care much for the praise, and she was impatiently trying to fasten a bracelet, which would not remain closed, on her plump arm. "It was very stupid of Itzig to buy me torquoises; he ought to have known that they are not in fashion."

"It is well set," replied the mother, soothingly; "it is good gold, and the newest shape."

"Where is Itzig? To-day, at least, he ought to come in right time; the family will be here, and the bridegroom absent," continued Rosalie, pouting.

"He will be here directly," answered Itzig's patroness; "you know how he is exerting himself that you may have a splendid house. You are happy," she added, sighing; "you are entering life, and will become a distinguished lady. After the marriage you will go for some weeks to the residence, where Itzig will present you to my family, and where you may pass the honeymoon in quiet. Meanwhile, I will arrange this apartment for you; I shall remove to the upper floor, and pass the rest of my life nursing Ehrenthal, and sitting with him in the empty room."

"Is father to come to the party?" asked Rosalie.

"He ought to come, on account of the family; he must give you his fatherly blessing."

"He will give us some insult, and talk some nonsense," said the dutiful daughter.

"I have told him what he is to say," answered the mother, "and he nodded to me as a sign that he understood it."

The bell rang, the door opened, and the kinsfolk made their appearance. Soon the rooms were filled; ladies in rich silk dresses with gold ornaments, sparkling ear-rings and chains, occupied the great sofas and chairs. Most of them were plump, here and there a brilliant dark eye, with a more striking figure, might be seen. They were sitting in groups, like beds of variegated tulips; among which the gardener had avoided placing any darker flower. On the other side, groups of men were

standing, sly faces, burying their hands in their trousers pockets, less solemn and less comfortable. Thus the relations awaited the bridegroom's appearance, who still delayed coming.

At last he appeared. His eye glanced suspiciously around, and his voice faltered as he greeted his bride. It seemed the greatest exertion to him to find even the commonest phrases with which to address the lovely girl, and he could have laughed fiercely at the dreary blank that he felt within himself. He did not see her bright eyes, nor her beautiful neck, nor her splendid figure. When he approached her, he could only think of something else, of which he was always thinking. He soon turned away from Rosalie, and mixed in the crowd of gentlemen, who had become more talkative since his arrival. Some commonplaces were heard from the younger ones, such as "Fraulein Rosalie looks enchanting to-night," "Will Ehrenthal come?" or "This long fog is unusual, it is unhealthy; one must wear jackets;" at last was heard from some one, "Four and a half per cent." Then the questions ceased, a topic of conversation had been found. Itzig was one of the loudest; he gesticulated on all sides. They talked of the exchange, of wool, and of the ill-luck of a merchant who had entered into so many speculations that he had failed. The ladies were forgotten. Accustomed to such isolation, they held their tea-cups solemnly in their hands, smoothed the folds of their dresses, and moved their necks and arms gracefully, so that their chains and bracelets glittered in the light.

The conversation was interrupted by a noise, the door opened, a general silence ensued, and a heavy arm-chair was rolled into the room.

On this chair an old man was sitting, with white hair, a coarse bloated face, and a pair of goggle eyes, which were staring vacantly; the body bent, and the arms hanging loosely by his side. It was Hersch Ehrenthal, a doting old man. When the chair was placed in the middle of the room, he looked slowly about, nodded his head, and repeated his lesson. "Good evening, good evening." His wife bent down to him, and called into his ear; "Do you know the ladies and gentlemen who are here? They are our kinsfolk."

"I know," said the figure, nodding, "it is a soirée. They are all gone to a great soirée, and I am left alone in my room.—And I was sitting by his bed. Where is Bernhard? why does he not come to his old father?"

The company who had gathered round the arm-chair, drew back embarrassed, and the lady of the house screamed again into the old man's ear, "Bernhard is on a journey, but your daughter Rosalie is here."

"On a journey is he?" asked the old man, in a melancholy tone; "where can he have gone to? I would have bought him a horse that he might ride. I would have bought an estate for him, that he might live as a respectable man, as he always has been. I know," he cried out, "that when I saw him last, he was on his bed. He was lying on his bed, and he raised his hand, and shook it against his father." He sank back into his chair, sobbing gently.

"Come here, Rosalie," called out the mother, alarmed at the fancies of the dotard. "When your father sees you, my child, other thoughts will come into his head." The daughter approached, and spreading her pocket-handkerchief before her, knelt down by her father's chair. "Do you know me, father?"

"I know you," said the old man; "you are a woman. What occasion is there for a woman to lie on the ground? Give me my prayer-mantle,

and say the prayers. I will kneel in your place and pray, for a long night has arisen. But when it is over, we will light the candles, and will sup. Then will be the time for putting on fine clothes.—Why do you wear a smart dress now, when the Lord is angry with the congregation?" He began to mutter a prayer, and again sank down.

Rosalie rose up angrily. The mother said, in great perplexity, "He is worse to-night than he has ever been before. I wished that the father should be present at his daughter's day of honour; but I see that he cannot fulfil the duties of the head of a family. I, therefore, as mother, must impart the glad news to the company. She solemnly took her daughter's hand, and said, "Come near, Itzig."

Itzig had hitherto been standing silent amongst the others, staring at the old man. He had from time to time shrugged his shoulders, and shook his head at the nonsense of the invalid, because he felt that it became him, on account of his position with the family. But another figure hovered before his eyes. He knew better than the others, who was crying and groaning; he also knew who had died and had not forgiven. He stepped mechanically up to the lady of the house, fixing his eyes on the old man. The guests formed a circle round him and Rosalie, and the mother took his hand.

Then the old man in his arm-chair began again to chatter. "Be quiet," he said audibly, "there he stands, the invisible. We come home from the funeral, and he dances among the women. He strikes the limbs of whoever he looks upon. There he stands," he shrieked aloud, rising from his seat. "There—there.—Throw down your basins, and fly to your homes. For he who stands there is cursed of the Lord. Cursed!" he yelled out, clenching his fists, and staggering furiously towards Itzig.

Itzig's face became livid. He endeavoured to laugh, but his features were distorted with terror. The door was suddenly burst open; his errand-boy looked anxiously in. Itzig cast only one glance on the boy, and he knew all that the other could tell him. He was discovered, he was in danger. He dashed out of the door.

Lay aside your bridal attire, beautiful Rosalie, throw your golden bracelet with turquoises into the darkest corner of the house, where mould covers the walls, and no ray of light falls on gold or precious jewels. The jewels will turn pale in the course of years; the wood-louse will settle in the links of the bracelet, and glide through the golden rings. Long-legged spiders will crawl over and spin their webs upon it, to surprise simple flies in the dark. Fling the bracelet far from you, for every grain of gold in it has been paid for by a rogues. Take off your nuptial robe, and wrap up your beautiful body in mourning; tear the flowers from your hair, pluck off the leaves, and throw them out into the night, as sport for the cold night wind. Watch them how they flutter in the light of the window, and disappear in the dark; they fall down into the dirt of the streets, and the foot of the passer-by covers them with mud. You will celebrate no betrothal, no wedding with your promising bridegroom; you will soon hurry through the streets with your head bent down, and wherever you pass, people will jog each other, and whisper, "That is his bride." And when the time comes, when your mother's hopes saw you in the residence, in the enjoyment of your honeymoon, you will inhabit a foreign town, to which you will fly to escape from the scorn of the malicious. You will not die of grief, and your cheeks will not grow pale; you are handsome, your father has collected much money; you will find more than one, who will be ready to be Itzig's successor. It will be your fate, to fall to one who will

marry you for your money, and you will despise him from the first day of your marriage, and will suffer him, as you would a disease that the physician cannot cure. You will wear new dresses of bright silk, and other trinkets will cling on your arm, and the object of your life will be to walk about as a dressed-up doll, comparing your husband jeeringly with other men. But the money which old Ehrenthal has collected for his children with a thousand anxieties, by usury and cunning, will again roll from one hand into another, will serve the good and the bad, and will flow into the mighty stream of capital, whose current preserves and embellishes the life of man, makes nations and commonwealths great, and individuals prosperous or miserable, according to their actions.

Out of doors the night was dark ; a cold drizzling rain fell through the thick air, and the foot passengers shivered, in spite of their warm autumn clothing. Itzig sprang down the stairs. On the steps he still heard a trembling voice : " The police are in the house ; they are in the court ; they wait on the stairs ; they broke open the parlour-door." He heard no more. A fearful anguish came over his soul. Thoughts raced through his head with wild rapidity : " Fly, fly," they all screamed to him. He felt for his pocket, in which during the last week he had carried about a portion of his fortune. He thought of the railroad trains ; it was not the hour that any train was going that would carry him to the sea ; and at every station he would find pursuers who were lurking for him. Thus he ran into the dark night, through narrow streets, into the remote quarters of the town. Wherever a lamp was burning, he shrank back. His steps became more and more rapid, and the train of his ideas more and more confused. At last his strength left him ; he cowered into a corner, and pressed his hands to his head, as if to keep his thoughts together. There he heard the hollow sound of the watchman's horn near him. The man was standing only a few paces from him, and his halbert rattled against the keys which hung to his girdle. The fugitive bent low to the ground, terror seized him, the oppression on his breast was so great that he could not help groaning, although it might cost him his life. Here also was danger. Again he rushed between the rows of houses, onwards to the only place that came distinctly to his mind, from which he shrank as from death, yet to which he was attracted, as the only hiding-place he had still on earth. When he came near the inn, he saw a dark shadow before the door. There the little man had often stood in the dark, waiting for Veitel returning home. To-night also he stood there waiting for him. The wretched man drew back, and again approached. The door was free ; he sought for the secret handle, and slipped in. But behind him the shadow rose again, threatening, out of the darkness of an adjacent cellar ; it glided behind him to the door, and there remained motionless.

The fugitive took off his boots, and slipped up the staircase. In the dark, he groped up to a door, opened it with trembling hand, and felt against the wall for a bunch of keys. He hastened with the keys through the common room to the balcony, and he heard, as in the distance, the breathing of sleeping men. He reached the door of the flight of steps. A violent shudder shook his limbs ; he tottered down, step by step. When he put his foot in the water, he heard a piteous groan. He clung to the wooden partition, as the other had done, and stared on the water. Again there was a groan from the depths of a breast ; he became aware that it was himself who thus breathed. With his foot he felt for the path in the water. The water had risen since that time ; it came high

above his knees; he had found the ground, and was standing in the river. The night was dark, the rain was still drizzling through the heavy air, fog covered the houses and the balconies along the river; a flight of steps, a supporting pillar, or the peaked roof of a house, immersed distinctly from the dark grey cloud. The stream rushed against the old posts, the steps, and the projections of the houses, and murmured monotonously. It was the only sound in the dark night, and it struck on the man's ear like the sound of thunder. While wading and groping with his hands, seeking, through the water and the rain, the way to safety, he felt all the tortures of the damned. He clung to the slippery posts, that he might not sink. He reached the steps of the neighbouring house; he felt for the keys in his pocket. One swing round the corner, and his foot would touch the staircase. As he was trying to turn, he fell powerless back; his foot, already raised, sank in the water, for in front of him, on the paling above the river, he saw a dark, bent figure. He could trace the outline of the old hat; in spite of the darkness, he beheld the hideous features of the well-known face; the phantom was sitting immovable before him. He passed his hand over his eyes and through the air, as if he would wipe it away. It was no deception: the spectre was sitting only a few paces before him. At last, the dreadful phantom pressed its hand against Itzig's breast. With a shriek, the criminal started back; his feet slipped from the path; he fell into the water, up to his neck. Thus he stood in the river. The wind howled over him; the water rushed more and more wildly by his ear, and more and more threateningly. He lifted up his arms; his eyes still glared on the apparition before him. Slowly the strange figure loosened itself from the post; there was a splashing on the way by which he himself had come. The spectre approached nearer; again it stretched out its hand against him. He sprang terrified farther into the stream. Another stagger, a loud scream, the short struggle of a drowning man, and all was over. The current rushed along, and dragged the dead body with it.

There was life again on the edge of the river; torches shone along the shore; weapons and half-covered uniforms glittered in the light. The cry of men seeking was heard. A man waded from the foot of the stairs along the shore, and called out to the others, "He floated away before I could reach him; to-morrow he will be found at the weir."

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## CHAPTER XII.

LOEBEL PINKUS's inn was searched, the secret magazine in the neighbouring house was confiscated, and, as a large amount of property was found there, the proceeds of old and new thefts, the innkeeper was put in prison. Amongst other articles was the empty casket of the baron, the bonds which the baron had given Ehrenthal, and the two mortgages of the first and last twenty thousand thalers charged on the estate, were lying, packed up together, in a locked-up cupboard of the secret den. A document was found in the house of Itzig, by which Pinkus declared that Veitel Itzig was the owner of the first mortgage. The obstinacy of Pinkus was much softened during the examination; he confessed, what he had no longer any great interest in denying, that he had paid the money to the baron as the agent of the drowned man, and that the former had, in

fact, only received ten thousand thalers. So the baron recovered his right to half of the first mortgage.

Pinkus was condemned to long imprisonment, the quiet inn was shut up, and Tinkels, who had, immediately after Itzig's death, demanded the second hundred from Anthony, from thenceforth carried his bundle and his kaftan to some other secret haunt. His devotion to the Firm was so much increased by these late events, that they were obliged to use great caution, and to reject some large transactions which he was anxious they should undertake. The natural consequence of this coldness was, to raise the respect of Tinkels for the prudence of the Firm, and he continued his visits to the office without interrupting the good footing they were on by any bold speculations. Pinkus's house was sold, an honest dyer set up there, and blue and black wool might be seen hanging down to the muddy river, from the balcony where once the haggard figure of young Veitel had leant.

After long negotiations with Ehrenthal's solicitor and his humiliated family, Anthony recovered the bonds and the last mortgage, on the payment of twenty thousand thalers.

Meanwhile the public auction of the family estate came on. Before the day of sale a purchaser called on Anthony, and with the consent of the baron and the assistance of his lawyer, made an arrangement with him that he was to offer at the sale a sum that would at least cover the last mortgage given to Ehrenthal. The price of land was still so low, that a higher offer could not be hoped for; and at the sale, to the result of which Anthony looked with great anxiety, the purchaser bought the estate for the sum agreed upon.

The day after the sale, Anthony wrote to the baroness; he sent her the baron's bonds, and his own full powers. He sealed the letter with the joyful feeling of having saved an inheritance of thirty thousand thalers for Leonora.

The white snow lay on the Starost Castle, and the rooks imprinted on it the traces of their feet. The bright festive attire of winter was spread over field and wood, the earth lay in a deep sleep, no shepherd's dog barked, and the farming implements lay inactive under a shed in the farm-yard. And yet a pleasant animation was visible on the estate; busy workmen were hastening across the farm-yard with foot-rules and saws, the ground of which was no longer level, for the foundations of new buildings had been dug; and in the rooms, and also out-of-doors in the sunshine, a host of artificers from the town—carpenters, joiners, and wheelwrights—were working. Merrily the journeyman whistled his song over his work, and the yellow shavings flew far into the yard. A new power and a new life were visible on the property; and when the spring comes a host of workmen will be spread over the Polish ground, and force the soil which has long been at rest to give its fruits as the reward of industry.

Father Sturm was sitting in his warm room at the joiner's bench, amidst hoops and cask staves, and his iron worked vigorously in the oak wood. Opposite him, the blind baron was resting on the only stuffed chair in the room, his crutch in his hand, turning his ear to old Sturm.

"You must be tired, Sturm," said the baron.

"Hey," said the giant, "my hands are as well as ever. This is mere child's work; it will be a small tub for rain-water."

"He once stuck in a small tub; he was a weak child, the nurse had put him in for a bath; he had bent his back and pressed his knees against



the side, so he could not get out. I was obliged to have the hoops knocked off in order to free the boy from prison."

The giant cleared his throat, and asked, sympathizingly, "Were they iron hoops?"

"It was my son," said the baron, with quivering lips.

"Indeed," said Sturm, softly; "he was handsome, a fine man; it was a pleasure to hear his sword rattle, and to see him twirl his little moustaches." He had told the blind father the same thing often; every day he had to repeat it when he was sitting opposite to the baron.

"It was the will of Heaven," said the baron, folding his hands.

"So it was," echoed old Sturm; "our Lord God would take him to Himself just as he was at his best work. It was honourable for him, and no man could die in a better cause. He put on his hussar's jacket for his fatherland and his parents, and he was victorious, and had chased the Poles into the fields, when the Lord called him, and placed him among his own guards."

"And I had to remain behind," said the baron.

"And I rejoice to have seen our young master," continued Sturm, with great eloquence; "for you know, then he was our young master. You trusted my Karl with the whole of your farming, and so it was an honour to me to show confidence in your son."

"It was wrong of him to borrow money from you," said the baron, shaking his head. He said so because he had often heard Sturm's consolatory answer, and wished to hear it again.

The giant laid his cooper's knife down, passed his fingers through his hair, tried to look very bold, as he began, in a careless tone: "You know one ought to make allowance for a young man; youth will sow its wild oats. Many a one borrows money in his younger days, especially when he wears so gay a coat, with tassels and silver. We were no misers, my lord baron," he continued, in a beseeching way, patting the blind man's knee with his iron. "And besides, the young officer was very civil; and I believe he was somewhat confused. And when I gave him the money, I saw how sorry he was to require it, and I gave it to him the more willingly. When I helped him into the droschky, he bent down from the carriage. I assure you he was quite touched. He put both his little hands out to give my fist another shake. And while he was thus sitting, the light of the street lamp fell on his face; it looked at that moment like a kind, dear face—something like yours, but still more like the baroness, as far as I have seen."

The blind man also stretched out his hand to shake the packer's fist. Sturm pushed the joiner's bench nearer, took the baron's hand with his right, and stroked it with his left hand, and thus they both sat silent together.

At length the baron began, with faltering voice: "You are the last man who showed kindness to my Eugene. I thank you—thank you from my heart. An unhappy, broken-down man tells you so; but as long as I continue to live in this world I will pray to Heaven to bless you. It was not ordained that I should have my son in my old age to support my tottering steps, but Heaven has preserved to you a good son. I pray to God to bestow on him whatever I could have wished of peace and happiness for my poor Eugene."

Sturm passed his hand over his eyes, and again clasped the baron's hands, and the two fathers sat silent by each other, till the baron rose with a sigh. Carefully Sturm took the arm of the blind man, and led him across the yard and pasture-ground, to the ramp of the castle. A

road had been formed, with a wall in front, of large square stones, so that one could drive or walk up to the door of the tower. Sturm rang the bell; the baron's servant hastened out and led his master up the stairs of the castle, for Father Sturm had still some difficulty in ascending the steps.

Meanwhile a carriage drove into the farm-yard. Karl hastened respectfully out of his room, and the new proprietor alighted.

"Good morning, sergeant," cried out, Fink. "How are things going on in the castle and farm? How are the Fraulein and baroness?"

"All right," answered Karl; "only the baroness gets weaker. We have been expecting you for the last fortnight. The family at the castle have been asking every day whether we had any news of you?"

"I was detained," said Fink, "and I should perhaps not have been back yet, but since the fall of the snow there was not much to be seen on the estates. I have bought Dobrowitz."

"Zounds!" cried Karl, delighted.

"It is a glorious soil," continued Fink. "Five hundred morgans of woodland, in which the black earth lies almost a foot deep. In the Polish hole near it, which they call a provincial town, the chaffers rushed about like ants when they heard that our spurs were to jingle daily over their market-place. But you will be delighted when you see the new estate. I should like to send you there in the spring. What have you got in your hand—a letter from Anthony? Give it to me." He opened the letter hastily. "Is the Fraulein in the castle?"

"Yes, Herr von Fink."

"Good. To-night an express is to go to the pastor of Neudorf." With rapid steps he went to the castle.

Leonora was sitting in her room; pieces of linen were lying around her; she was busily sewing, and pricked her fingers from the hardness of the stuff, and laid the seam from time to time on her knee, smoothed it down with her thimble, and examined the stitches carefully to see if they were small and regular. Suddenly she heard the sound of a quick step in the passage; she started up, and convulsively laid hold of the linen; but she controlled herself with great resolution, and sat down again to her work. There was a knock at the door. A deep crimson suffused her neck and cheeks, and her "Come in" hardly reached the ear of the visitor. Fink, on entering, looked with curiosity round the unadorned room: some chalk drawings of Leonora's hung against the walls; otherwise there was nothing but the most indispensable pieces of furniture. The little sofa with panther skins was no longer there.

When Fink bowed to Leonora, she asked, in a tone of indifference, "Has anything unpleasant detained you? We have all been anxious about you."

"The purchase of an estate delayed my return. Now I hasten to wait on my mistress, and I bring you a packet which Anthony has sent for the baroness. If the state of your mother's health will allow of my waiting upon her, I beg to be admitted."

Leonora took the letter. "I will go immediately to my mother; pray excuse me." She bowed, and endeavoured to pass by him.

Fink kept her back by a movement of his hand, and said, jokingly, "I see you are occupied, like a good housewife, with your scissors and needle. Who is the fortunate man for whom those wedge-like pieces have been sewn together?"

Leonora blushed again. "That is ladies' work, and gentlemen must not ask about it."

"I know that the thimble is generally not in favour with you," said Fink, good-humouredly. "Is it necessary, dear young lady, that you should spoil your eyes?"

"Yes, Herr von Fink," answered Leonora, firmly, "it is necessary, and it will be necessary."

"Indeed," cried Fink, shaking his head, and leaning comfortably against an arm-chair. "Do you think that I have not long ago remarked your secret campaign with the needle and scissors? and also your serious face, and the truly glorious manner in which you have treated a bold boy like me? Where is the cat sofa? Where is the brotherly openness which I had a right to expect from our compact? You have kept our terms badly. I see clearly that my good friend is inclined to give me up, and draws back in the best manner she can. But allow me to observe that it will be of little use to you. You won't get rid of me."

"Be generous, Herr von Fink," interposed Leonora, in great agitation. "Do not make what I have to do more difficult for me. I am preparing to part from this place, and from you also."

"Then you refuse to remain with me here," said Fink, frowning. "Well, I shall return, and petition you, till you listen to me. If you run away, I shall go after you. And if you cut off your beautiful hair, and fly into a convent, I shall blow up the walls and carry you off. Have I not wooed you as the good-for-nothing, in the fairy tale, did the king's daughter? In order to win you, proud Leonora, I have changed sand into grass, and myself into an honest yeoman. You are responsible for these wonders: therefore, my beloved mistress, be reasonable, and do not torment me with any of your girlish whims."

"Oh, honour these whims!" exclaimed Leonora, bursting into tears. "In the solitude of these last few weeks I have every hour struggled with my grief. I am a poor girl, whose only duty now is to live for her suffering parents. The only dowry I could bring you would be sickness, melancholy, and helplessness."

"You are mistaken," interrupted Fink, seriously. "Our friend has taken care of you. He has chased two rogues into the water, and paid your father's debts. To the baron there will remain a nice little fortune, all thoughts of poverty are at an end: and you yourself, stubborn girl, are by no means a bad partie if you care for that. The letter you hold in your hand ruins your philosophy."

Leonora fixed her eyes on the cover, and then threw the letter from her.

"No," she cried, quite beside herself. "When, torn by anguish, I lay upon your heart, you called on me to acquire strength, even against yourself. And every day I feel that I have no strength with respect to you; I have no opinion, no will of my own. Whatever you say, appears to me true, and I forget that I ever thought otherwise: whatever you bid me do, like a slave, I obey without resistance. The wife who should go by your side through life, ought to be equal to you in intelligence and energy, and should feel self-reliant in her own sphere. I am an awkward, helpless girl: in a moment of foolish passion I betrayed to you that I would, for your sake, risk what no woman ought to risk. You find nothing in me that you can respect. You would kiss me, and tolerate me."

Leonora's hand was clenched, and her eyes flashing. Thus she stood before him, her figure trembling with the struggle between pride and love.

"Do you repent so much having sent a ball into the shoulder of the

assassin?" asked Fink, gloomily. "What I meet with, does not appear like love, but rather like hate."

"I hate you!" called out Leonora, covering her face with her hands.

He took her hands from her face, drew her towards him, imprinted a kiss on her lips, and said, "Trust to me, Leonora."

"Leave me, leave me," called out Leonora, struggling with herself, but at the same time embracing him firmly, and looking up to him with a passionate expression of love and fear, she sank to his feet.

Deeply moved, Fink bent down and raised her up. "Thou art mine, and I hold thee fast," exclaimed Fink, "With my rifle and my ball have I won thee, my stormy heart! in one breath thou givest me affectionate and hard words. Zounds, am I such a slave-driver that a brave woman need be afraid of coming under my sway? I wish to have thee, Leonora, just as thou art, and no otherwise,—decided, bold, and a little devil of passion. We have been brothers in arms, and we will remain in this country. The day may return when we shall both take our guns in our hands, for the people about us have a disposition rather to give blows than to bear them. And if you had not been the object of my heart, and if you were a man, I should choose you as the companion of my life. For, Leonora, you will not only be to me a beloved wife, but a courageous friend, the confidant of my actions, my most trusty comrade."

Leonora shook her head, but remained clinging to him. "Then I am to be your wife," she said, sadly.

Fink passed his hand over her hair coaxingly, and kissed her burning forehead. "Be content, my darling," he said, tenderly, "and make up your mind to it. We have stood together under a fire that was hot enough to ripen every deep feeling; and we know each other. Between ourselves, it must be said, we shall sometimes have a whirlwind in our house. I am no easy fellow to live with, at least for a woman, and you will good-humouredly recover that will of your own, the loss of which you are now lamenting. Be calm, sweetheart; you will again become as wilful as you have been, you need not distress yourself about that. Therefore, count upon some storms, but also on a devoted love and a merry life. I shall see you laugh again, Leonora. There will be no occasion for you to sew my shirts; and if you do not like to keep the house-books, leave them alone; and if sometimes, in a passion, you give your sons a box on the ear, it will not hurt our brood. I hope, therefore, you will give in."

Leonora did not speak, but nestled closer to his breast.

Fink drew her away. "Come to your mother," he said.

Fink and Leonora bent over the bed of the invalid. A bright look of happiness passed over the mother's face, as she laid her hands on his head and blessed him.

"She is weak, and still a child," she said to him. "It lies in your power, my son, to make a good wife of her."

She sent them from her room. "Go to your father, and bring him to me, and leave us alone."

When the baron was seated by his wife, she took his hand, pressed it to her lips, and whispered, "To-day I thank you, Oscar, for many years of happiness, and for all your love."

"Poor wife!" murmured the blind man.

"Whatever you have done and suffered," continued the baroness, "you have done and suffered for me and my son, and we both leave you alone

in a joyless world. You were not to enjoy the happiness of transmitting your name to your posterity. You are the last that will bear the name of Rothsattel."

The baron groaned.

"But the name which we leave will be spotless, as your whole life has been—except two hours of despair." She placed the baron's hand on the packet of bonds, and tore every one of them; then rang for the servant, and had them thrown, bit by bit, into the stove. The flame flickered up bright, and cast a red light over the room; it rustled and crackled until it burned out. The evening twilight fell upon the room, and the baron knelt by the bedside of his sick wife, pressing his head on the coverlid, whilst she held her hands folded over him, and her lips moved in prayer.

In the grey morning the rooks and daws fluttered over the snowy roof of the castle. The dark birds hovered round about the battlements of the tower, and, with loud cries, set out for the wood and told their kin that a bride and a corpse were in the house. The pale lady from the foreign country had died in the night, and the blind man, who is lying broken-hearted in his daughter's arms, has only one consolation in his grief; he will soon follow her who has, at length, found eternal rest. And the birds of ill-omen cry out in the air, that the foreign settlers also are doomed to the old Slavonian curse weighing on the castle and land.

But the man who now commands in the castle cares little whether a rook screams or a lark sings, and if a curse is lying on his land, he blows it away. His life will be a continual victorious combat against the dark spirits which haunt the country, and from the Slave castle a host of vigorous boys will spring up, and a new German race, strong in body and mind, will spread over the land; a race of settlers and conquerors.

Fink informed his friend, in a few affectionate words, of his engagement to Leonora, and of the death of the baroness. Inclosed was a sealed letter for Sabine.

It was evening when the postman brought the letter to Anthony's room. He sat a long while over it, leaning his head on his hand; at last he took the letter directed to Sabine, and hastened to the merchant's apartments.

He found Herr Schroeter in his study, and gave him the letter. The merchant immediately called out to Sabine, "Fink is engaged to be married; here is the announcement to you."

Sabine clapped her hands with delight, and hastened up to Anthony, but she stopped on the way blushing, held up her letter to the lamp, and opened it. It could not be long, for she read it in a moment. She tried to look serious, but her lips would not obey, she could not suppress a smile. At any other time Anthony would have observed this with intense interest, but now he hardly noticed it.

"You will pass the evening with us, dear Wohlfart?" said the merchant.

Anthony answered, "I intended to ask you to grant me a few minutes' conversation. I have something to communicate to you." He looked uneasily at Sabine.

"Let us hear it! Stay, Sabine," called out the merchant to his sister, who, after Anthony's words, tried to slip away, "you are good friends; Herr Wohlfart will feel no constraint in your presence. Speak, my friend, how can I serve you?"

Anthony pressed his lips together, and looked again at the loved one, who leant against the door, looking down. "Then I ask you, Herr Schroeter," he at last forced himself to say, "whether you have found the situation for which you kindly offered to look out?"

Sabine moved uneasily, and the merchant also looked surprised, "I believe I could offer you something; but is there such a hurry, dear Wohlfart?"

"Yes," answered Anthony, gravely. "I have no time to lose. My connection with the Rothsattel family is now at an end. The fearful things which, within the last few weeks, have been brought about through my proceedings, have unstrung me, both mind and body, and I long for rest. Regular work in some other place, where nothing will remind me of the past, is what I now need."

Again Sabine moved, but an earnest look from her brother kept her back.

"And this rest, which I also desire for you, cannot you find it with us?" asked the merchant.

"No," replied Anthony, almost inaudibly. "I beg you not to be angry with me if I take leave of you this very night."

"Take leave!" exclaimed the Principal, with surprise. "I do not understand why there is so much haste. You should recover yourself in our house; the ladies shall take better care of you than they have hitherto done. Wohlfart has reason to complain of you, Sabine. He looks pale and worn out. You and aunt ought not to let that go on."

Sabine made no answer.

"I must go, Herr Schroeter," said Anthony, firmly; "to-morrow I start."

"And will you not tell your friends why you must go so suddenly?" asked the Principal, gravely.

"You know why. I have closed my account with the past. I have hitherto taken little care for the future. I am so situated that I must seek for confidence and goodwill in the service of strangers. And I have become very poor in friends, too. I must for years, for a long time, separate myself from all who are dear to me. I have reason to feel myself alone, and as I am obliged to begin life afresh, the sooner I do so the better, for every day I spend here is lost; it diminishes my energy, and makes the necessary separation more severe." He spoke this with deep emotion; his voice trembled, but he did not lose his composure. He approached Sabine and took her hand. "In this parting hour I tell you, in the presence of your brother, what it cannot offend you to hear, because you have long known it, that the separation from you pains me more than I can say. Fare you well." Here he was so overpowered by his feelings, that he turned quickly away and went up to the window.

After a pause the merchant began: "Your hurrying away from us, dear Wohlfart, vexes my sister also much. Sabine just now requires some knightly service from you, such as the sister of a merchant may claim. I also wish you not to refuse her request. Sabine begs you to peruse some papers, and to maintain her interests against mine; it is no great work."

Anthony, with great self-command, turned round and made a sign of acquiescence.

"But first I must inform you of a circumstance which perhaps is not yet known to you," continued the merchant. "Sabine, since my father's death, has been a sleeping partner in the Firm; her advice and wishes

have decided more transactions than you have any idea of. She has also been your Principal, dear Wohlfart." He gave his sister a sign, and left the room.

Anthony looked in astonishment at the Principal attired in lady's dress. He had, then, without knowing it, obeyed and served her also for some years. And as in the olden times the wayfaring vassal has bowed before his young liege-lady, so he involuntarily inclined his head before the young girl, who now, with blushing cheeks, walked up to him.

"Yes, Wohlfart," said Sabine, shyly, "I too have had a small right to your services. And how proud I have been of it! It was I who promised your father that you should be taken care of here. I was then only an inexperienced child myself, and the confidence of the stranger made me quite happy. The worthy old man, your father, would not put on his velvet cap, which was peeping out of his pocket, in our house, till I pulled it out and pressed it down over his white curls. I wondered then if my pupil would have as beautiful curls. When you came here, and every one liked you, and my brother called you the best among the young clerks, I was as proud of you as ever your good father could have been."

Anthony leant over the desk and covered his eyes with his hand.

"And because I considered you as belonging a little to me, I begged my brother to take you with him on that dangerous journey; knowing you to be with him, I did not feel so entirely separated from him. You were working for me when you were in that foreign country, Wohlfart; and when in that fearful night you stood by the waggons under fire, and amidst the clashing of arms, it was my goods that you saved. And therefore, my friend, I come to you once more, in my character of merchant, and beg you to do some more work for me. You are to look through an account for me."

"I will, Fraulein," answered Anthony, turning away, "but not at this moment."

Sabine put her hand into a chest, took out two books bound in green leather with gilt edges, and laid them on the desk. She took Anthony's hand, and with trembling voice, said, "Come, pray look at my 'Debit und Credit.'" She opened the first book. Under artistic flourishes stood the words: "By the help of God, the secret book of T. O. Schroeter."

Anthony started back. "It is the secret book of the Firm," he exclaimed; "this is a mistake."

"It is no mistake; I wish you to look through it," said Sabine.

"That is impossible," replied Anthony; "neither your brother nor you can seriously wish it. God forbid that any one should touch this book, except the heads of the Firm. So long as a commercial house exists, these leaves are for the eyes of none but the master, and at his death for his nearest heirs. Whoever looks into this book, learns what no stranger ought to know, and with respect to it, the truest friend is a stranger. As merchant and an honest man, I dare not grant your wish."

Sabine held his hand fast. "Nevertheless, look at it, Wohlfart," she said, "look at the title." She opened it again. "In this book T. O. Schroeter is written." She passed her hand over the leaves. "There are only a few empty pages, it ends with the last year." She opened the cover of the second book, and said, "This book is empty, but it is another firm: what is written here?"

Anthony read! "By the help of God, the secret book of T. O. Schroeter and Co."

Sabine pressed his hand, and said in a low voice: "And you, my friend, are to be the new partner."

Anthony stood motionless, but his heart throbbed violently, and the colour rose to his cheeks. Sabine still held his hand, and he felt her kiss upon his lips like a soft breath. Then he put his arm round the beloved one, and they held each other in a mute embrace.

The door opened, the merchant stood on the threshold. "Hold the fugitive fast," he cried out; "yes, Anthony, for years I have been longing for this hour. Ever since you knelt by my couch in that foreign country, and bound up my wound, I have cherished in my heart the wish of uniting you for ever to our life. When you left us, I saw with indignation my fondest hopes destroyed; now we hold you, wanderer, in the pages of the secret book, and in our arms." He embraced the lovers.

"You have chosen a poor partner," said Anthony, as his new brother pressed him to his heart.

"No, my brother, Sabine has acted like a wise merchant. Property and wealth have no value, either for individuals or for the state, without the sound qualities which give life and movement to the dead metal. You bring to the Firm your youthful energy and tried judgment. Welcome to our house and hearts."

Beaming with delight, Sabine held both hands of her betrothed. "I could hardly bear seeing you so silent and sorrowful. Every day at dinner, when you removed your chair, I felt as if I must fly after you, and tell you that you belonged to us for ever. You blind creature, not to have seen what was passing in me, and yet Leonora's bridegroom knew it all."

"He?" exclaimed Anthony. "I never spoke to him about you."

"See here," cried Sabine, taking Fink's letter out of her pocket. "It contains nothing but the words, 'Loving friendship, Frau sister-in-law.'"

Again the happy Anthony embraced his love.

Adorn thyself, thou old patrician house; rejoice, careful aunt; dance, ye industrious house spirits in the dusky hall; cut somersets on thy writing-table, thou merry cat! The poetical dreams which the boy Anthony fostered in the paternal house under the blessing of his good parents, were honourable dreams. They have been realised. He has subdued with manly spirit that which enticed him, and disturbed his life. The old book of his life is closed, and in your secret book, you good spirits of the house, will henceforth be recorded: "By the help of God," his new "Debit and Credit."

THE END.





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